

The
with the
Monday 3
AN
ABRIDGEMENT
OF A
DISCOURSE
ON
SELF-DEDICATION,

By JOHN HOWE, A. M.

AND THE
T E M P E R
OF
JESUS TOWARDS HIS ENEMIES,
AND HIS
GRACE to the CHIEF of SINNERS,

In his commanding the GOSPEL to
BEGIN AT JERUSALEM.

By B. GROSVENOR, D.D.

To which are prefixed,
THE LIVES OF THE AUTHORS.

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AN
ABRIDGMENT

DISCOURSE

ON
SELF-DEDICATION

BY JOHN HOWE, A.M.

AND THE
T E M P E R
JESUS'S REMISSIONS



GRACE to the CHURCH OF ENGLAND

In his commandment the GOSPEL is
BEGIN AT JERUSALEM.

BY R. GROSSEMORE, D.D.

THE LIVES OF THE APOSTLES


CAMBRIDGE
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Concerning the DISCOURSE

ON

SELF-DEDICATION*.

GLAD would the editor of this little piece have been, could he have avoided saying any thing about himself on the present occasion: but as that is impossible, he will just relate the occasion on which this Sermon was originally preached; and then mention the liberties that have been taken to reduce it to the form in which it is now presented to public view.

The Earl of Kildare, having, by a fall from his horse†, received a wound which had prov-

* In the posthumous sermons of Dr. Chandler, there are two from the same text which Mr. Howe has chosen. And as, in the explanation of the terms, the Doctor's general ideas correspond with our Author's, one passage has been made use of in the first part of the sermon.

December 3, 1674. Dedication, p. 2.

ed nearly fatal to him; out of gratitude to the preserver of his life, set apart the anniversary of this great deliverance, for domestic, religious purposes. On one of these solemn occasions, Mr. Howe preached a Sermon on SELF-DEDICATION, which was afterwards, at his Lordship's desire, published.

About eighteen months ago, this Sermon came into the hands of the editor. The subject being common, he did not expect to find any thing remarkably striking: but he was most happily disappointed. Indeed, it appeared to him, that the reasoning in the body of the discourse was so forcible, and the application of it contained so much manly and christian eloquence, that every one who read it must be convinced that religion was a reasonable service, and that the mercies of God oblige us to devote ourselves to him. It will not be wondered at that views like these produced a desire of its being more universally known. However, on a closer inspection, he had vanity enough to think it might be presented to the readers of the present day, in a form more likely to gain their attention than that in which it first appeared. Accordingly this hath been attempted—with what success time only can determine.

The Original contains about as much more as is now preserved. Something is left out in the explanation of the text; and yet, it is hoped,
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the leading ideas are retained. But the greatest omissions will be found under the last particular, and between pages fifty-eight and sixty-four †. There are, however, exclusive of these, many other alterations. Obsolete words are generally changed for more common ones—redundancies are omitted—the construction of sentences altered—and, in many places, an attempt hath been made to soften the style, and render it more perspicuous and pleasing.

After all, for a man of *no* learning, and but little leisure from business, to appear as the abridger of so celebrated an author, may be thought deserving of the severest censure: and, should this generally fall on the editor, he is prepared for its reception. Very sensible he is, that the piece, though small, hath many faults: but having devoted more time to prepare it for public inspection, than can be imagined by any, who have not, with his disadvantages, been engaged in similar undertakings, he now submits both it, and the following Life of Mr. Howe, with all their imperfections, to the candour of the public, and the blessing of God.

† What is included between these pages, is particularly addressed to the noble person before whom the sermon was preached.

Dr.

*** Dr. Grosvenor's TEMPER OF JESUS, is printed almost verbatim, from the original edition in 1712. The spelling may indeed sometimes be altered in conformity with the modern practice—a relative, or even another word changed, omitted, or added—but nothing deserving of particular notice hath been attempted.

CAMBRIDGE, }
April 16, 1785. }

J. A.



JOHN

JOHN HOWE, A. M. the writer of the following discourse, was an eminent Non-conformist divine, who flourished great part of the last, and the beginning of the present century. He was born in 1630, at Loughborough, in Leicestershire, of which place his father was the worthy minister, and sent early to Christ college, Cambridge, where he became acquainted with those famous men, Dr. Cudworth, and Dr. Henry More, from whom he probably received that Platonic tincture, which so remarkably runs through the writings he published in his advanced years. After taking his Bachelor's degree, he went to Oxford, became fellow of Magdalen college, and took the degree of Master of Arts.

The first place where he preached was Great Torrington, in Devonshire, from whence he was ejected by the Bartholomew act*. After this he continued some time in Devonshire, preaching in private houses, probably, till 1665, when, with eleven other ministers, he took the oath required by the Oxford act, making, at the same time, a declaration concerning the sense of it†. In 1671, being reduced to straits, he accepted an invitation from a person of quality to settle in Ireland; and was chaplain for five years to Lord Massarene, in the parish of Antrim.

* "Bartholomew-day was fatal to our church and religion, in throwing out a very great number of worthy, learned, pious, and orthodox divines." Locke.

† Life by Calamy, p. 41.

Upon the death of Dr. Seaman, in 1675, he came to London, and preached to a considerable and judicious auditory, by whom he was singularly respected. But though he was remarkable for a peaceable spirit, yet the misguided zeal of the times, obliged him once more to leave his native country. Dr. Barlow, bishop of Lincoln, printed a letter for putting in execution the laws against dissenters. Mr. Howe wrote a free answer* to his Lordship by the post; and finding the dissenters universally run down, and the prospect with respect to the public grow every day more and more gloomy, he accepted Lord Wharton's invitation, to travel with him abroad.

In 1686, finding no encouragement to return home, he settled at Utrecht, took his turn of preaching at the English church in that city with Mr. Matthew Mead, and others; and in the evening preached to his own family. During his stay here, he became acquainted with Dr. Burnet, afterwards bishop of Salisbury, with whom he had much free conversation †. The prince of Orange

* This answer may be seen at large in his life by Calamy, p. 104

† "Discouraging once of non-conformity, the Doctor told our author, that he was apprehensive it could not subsist long, but that when Mr. Baxter, Dr. Bates, and he, and a few more, were once laid in their graves, it would sink, and die, and come to nothing." Mr. Howe replied, "That must be left to God, though at the same time he intimated, that he had different apprehensions, and did not reckon it to depend upon persons, but upon principles." It is rather surprizing that Dr. Burnet, several years after he was bishop of Salisbury, should tell Dr. Calamy, that "it was not only his apprehension, but the apprehension of the great men of the church, that non-conformity would not have been continued to another generation;" since, as the Doctor judiciously observed, that "as long as the spirit of imposition continued, it was reasonable to expect that some would think themselves obliged to stand up for a gene-

Orange also, afterwards William III. admitted him several times into his presence, and talked to him with great freedom; as he sometimes did, after he ascended the British throne.

Upon king James's declaration for liberty of conscience, Mr. Howe's flock in London, earnestly pressed his return, with which he readily complied. He was thankful for a little breathing time, and endeavoured to improve it to the best of purposes.

Upon the glorious Revolution, he addressed the prince of Orange, at the head of the dissenting ministers, in an handsome speech. On the passing of the toleration act, he addressed a small tract to conformists and dissenters, with a view to promote mutual forbearance. The last thing he published was, a *Discourse of Patience, in expecting Future Blessedness*. This was what he had particular occasion for. Having employed his time, strength, and interest, in the most valuable services, he was wasted with several diseases, which he bore with great patience and resignation to the will of his heavenly Father. He would be very pleasant sometimes in his last sickness, and talked freely with several who came to visit him. Among the rest, Richard Cromwel, who was now grown old, and had lived many years retired from the world, hearing that he was going off the stage, came to make him a respectful visit, and take his leave of him before he died. There was a great deal of serious discourse between them; tears were freely shed on both sides, and the parting was very solemn.

He discovered no fear of dying, but talked with many ministers who came to visit him like one of another

rous liberty." Ibid. 128, 129. Fletcher's Essay on the Life of Mr. Howe, prefixed to his posthumous Sermons on the love of God and our neighbours, p. 53, note.

world, who had exalted and uncommon hopes of the blessedness there which his heart had been long set upon.

Having a mortification in his leg, his son, a physician, with a kind design, took the liberty to lance it without his leave, upon which Mr. Howe cried out, "What are you doing? I am not afraid of dying, but I am afraid of pain." He seemed indeed, sometimes, to be got to heaven, even before he had laid aside mortality. His hope of heaven was however, accompanied with great humility, which led him to say, "I expect my salvation, not as a profitable servant, but as a pardoned sinner." Being at last quite worn out, he finished his course with joy, April 2, 1705, and was translated into the calm and peaceable regions of the blessed, where perfect charity and serenity reign for ever.

Whether Mr. Howe be considered as a man, a christian, or an author, he shone in every situation with peculiar lustre.

He was a close reasoner, had a penetrating judgment, and an openness and generosity of soul which endeared him to all who had the pleasure of his acquaintance. As a christian, he did honour not to the cause of non-conformity only, but to Christianity in general. His learning, moderation, and piety, rendered him highly esteemed, by many eminent Conformists during his life*; and have contributed to hand him down to posterity as one of the greatest ornaments of the age in which he lived. In short, as Dr. Calamy observes, "he seemed to have been born into the world to support generous principles, a truly catholic spirit, and an extensive charity."

* Among these were the Bishops Wilkins and Tillotson, and the Doctors Cudworth, Fowler, Whichcote, &c. &c.

Nor must his character as an author be here omitted. His intellectual accomplishments were indeed eminent. To his comprehensive mind all the rich stores of science were familiar.

Even Wood, is complaisant enough, after having owned Mr. Howe for a person of neat and polite parts, to commend him also for his style; calling it "fine, smooth, and natural." But "this is a mistake," says the writer of his life in the General Dictionary, "since Mr. Howe's style is, in general, allowed to be very harsh, embarrassed, and obscure *." Mr. Fletcher's words are, "his style is what is principally complained of by his greatest admirers; not but that it is sometimes smooth, and very frequently grand and noble." But whatever may be the dispute concerning his style, there can be none concerning the excellent tendency of his writings. Christian liberty is the noble principle upon which they all go: for, great as were his abilities, his his catholicism was equal to them. He was an utter enemy to all impositions, and for making nothing necessary to christian communion, but what Christ has made necessary, or, what is indeed necessary to one's being a christian. In a word, he looked upon the christian scheme, not as a system of opinions, or a set of forms, so much as a divine discipline, to purify the heart, and reform the life. Here he laid the main stress, as appears

* "Dr. Felton, in his Introduction to the Classics, is pleased to say, that none of the dissenters have any style at all; at the same time that he highly extols that of Bishop Sprat, the author of the History of the Royal Society, published soon after the restoration. But let any of Dr. Sprat's pages be compared with our author's glorious allegory of the ruined temple †, and let Dr. Felton's reputation stand or fall with that of the Bishop." Fletcher's Essay, p. 26, note (b).

† See vol. i. of Mr. Howe's works in folio, p. 155, 156, and vol. ii. p. 159—143. of his Living Temple in 8vo.

from all his writings: but perhaps, this is no where more evident than in the preface to his two sermons on the Carnality of religious Contention.

His capital work is intitled the *LIVING TEMPLE*. The design of the whole is to demonstrate the existence of the Deity; and to improve the notion that a good man is the *Temple of God*. The proof that God is, extends through the first part or volume, and to the middle of the third chapter of the second—the remainder of the volume contains the proof, and explains the manner of God's conversibleness with men. In the proof of the Divine existence and attributes, he hath acquitted himself like an able metaphysician; and seems to have been no stranger to many metaphysical discoveries, which have since been attributed to another great genius of our nation, confessedly superior to him in clearness of style and method, but who must evidently been beholden to the reading of this very book for a great many things, which now appear with vastly greater advantage in his own excellent *Demonstration* *.

In

* It is hardly necessary to add, that Dr. Clarke is the person here alluded to. What is said of his being beholden to the *Living Temple* for many things in his *Demonstration*, is taken from a note by a friend of Mr. Fletcher's inserted in his *Essay on the Writings, &c. of Mr. Howe*. It is also said, in the addition to Dr. Clarke's life in the *Biographia Britannica*, "We speak likewise from memory, (referring to a circumstance just mentioned) when we say, that Dr. Clarke had read and availed himself of Howe's *Living Temple*, though we do not recollect that he even made such an acknowledgment." Putting these things together, the writer of the present note has taken some pains in comparing the *Demonstration* with the *Living Temple*; and confesses he has been frequently struck with the resemblance the former bears to the latter in many particulars. But as it does not appear that the Doctor ever acknowledged himself indebted to Mr. Howe, it would be wrong, especially at this distance of time, to say any thing positive on the subject. It is farther said

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In the year 1724, his works were published in two volumes, folio, dedicated to his majesty, King George I. The rev. Mr. Chandler *, who wrote the dedication, tells his Majesty, that " Mr. Howe was a person eminent for his great piety, learning, and moderation: who, though he lived in the times of our general confusion, lived unblameable, and without offence."

It were easy to swell this account to triple its bulk, by transcribing encomiums on him and his writings from authors of very different sentiments in other respects. But a sketch only was intended. They who wish to see a more particular account of him are referred to Fletcher's Essay, so often quoted, or to Dr. Calamy's Memoirs †.

To conclude in the words of Mr. Fletcher. " It is not to be wondered at, that a man of so great abilities, of inflexible integrity, of such fervent piety to God, and the most ardent and unaffected benevolence to man-

in the Biographia, that " in the defence of the sacred original and authority of Christianity, Dr. Clarke is understood to have been under some obligations to Mr. Baxter's Reasons of the Christian Religion, which he considered as one of the most masterly performances on the subject of any in the English language." The rev. Mr. Jones, who printed some anecdotes of the Doctor in the Gentleman's Magazine, adds, that " he made such a declaration to Dr. Doddridge." But Dr. Kippis " has no doubt but that Mr. Jones was mistaken, being well assured, that Dr. Doddridge had never any personal acquaintance with Dr. Clarke." Biogra. Brittan. vol. iii. p. 608. 2d edit. Fletcher, p. 72, note (i). Gent. Mag. for March, 1781.

* Afterwards D. D. and F. R. S. and A. S. S.

† To compile this life of Mr. Howe, short as it is, the following works have been consulted. Memoirs of his Life, by Dr. Calamy. Fletcher's Essay on the Life, Writings, and Character of Mr. John Howe, prefixed to his posthumous Sermons on the love of God and our neighbour. Non-conformists Memorial, new edition, by Palmer. General Dictionary; and the new edition of the Biographia Britannica.

kind,

kind, should be so much respected in his life-time ; or that his very name should be mentioned with such uncommon honour, as it is to this day. What a noble argument is this in favour of religion ! for a life, so usefully spent, will certainly have a glorious period, and be crowned with immortal honour. *The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance *.*"

Although most christians are convinced of its being their duty to reprove vice ; yet, how to do it properly, they know not. — Mr. Howe appearing to have excelled in this, the following anecdote is inserted.

" Being at dinner, one day, with some persons of very good fashion, there was a gentleman in the company, who expatiated with great freedom in praise of King Charles I. and made some indecent reflections on others, that were not at all agreeable to several at the table. Our Author observing that he intermixed a great many oaths with his discourse, took the freedom to tell him, That, in his humble opinion, he had wholly omitted one very great excellence, which the prince he extolled, was so generally owned to have belonging to him, that he had not known of any one who had the face to contest it. The gentleman seemed not a little pleased to have Mr. Howe come in as a voucher for the prince he applauded, and was very impatient to know what that particular excel-

* Psa. cxii. 6.

“ lence was, that he referred to. And, when he had
 “ pressed for it with importunity, he at length told him
 “ it was this ; That he was never heard to swear an
 “ oath in common conversation. The gentleman
 “ took the reproof, and promised to forbear swearing
 “ for the future.” Calamy.



SELF.

"I have been told that he is not
"puffed for it with importance, as at length said
"it was true: That he was never heard to be
"only in common conversation. The
"took the report, and promised to be
"for the benefit of Germany."



SELF-DEDICATION.

R O M. XII. 1.

I BESEECH YOU THEREFORE, BRETHREN, BY THE MERCIES OF GOD, THAT YE PRESENT YOUR BODIES A LIVING SACRIFICE, HOLY, ACCEPTABLE UNTO GOD, WHICH IS YOUR REASONABLE SERVICE.

THERE are two things more especially to be considered in these words: The *matter* of the exhortation, that we *present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, our reasonable service*; and the pressing request used to enforce it.—*I beseech you by the mercies of God.*

The former I intend for the principal subject of the following discourse; and shall only make use of the other, for the purpose unto which the holy Apostle doth here apply it.

Our first business, therefore, must be, to shew the import of the exhortation: and in doing this, we shall,

I. Explain the terms wherein the text delivers it.

II. Declare, more distinctly, the nature of the thing expressed by them.

1. For the terms. By *bodies*, we are to understand our whole selves, expressed here by the name of *bodies*

for distinction's sake. It having been usual heretofore, to offer in sacrifice the bodies of beasts, the Apostle tells them they are now to offer their own; meaning their whole man, as some of the following words intimate; and agreeably to the meaning of that exhortation, *Glorify God in your bodies and spirits which are his* *.

The word *sacrifice*, here signifies, whatever is by God's own appointment, dedicated to himself.

In the addition of *living*, the design is carried on of speaking both by way of allusion and opposition to the sacrifices appointed by the Jewish ritual. By way of *allusion*. For any thing which died of itself the Israelites were not to eat, because they were an holy people: much more had it been detestable as a sacrifice to God. The beast must be brought *alive* to the altar; and we are to offer our bodies a *living* sacrifice; so far there is an agreement. Yet a difference seems also suggested. The victim, brought *alive* to be sacrificed, was to be *slain* in sacrificing; but here, *living*, may also signify continuing to live: you may be sacrifices, and yet live still: which shews, by the way, that the sacrifice we are here to offer is not merely bodily: No. The bodily life is but alluded to; it is an higher and more excellent one; the spiritual, divine life. *Yield yourselves to God, as those that are alive from the dead* †; and verse 11. shews what this being *alive* means, *Reckon yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin: but alive unto God through Jesus Christ, our Lord*. Alive, by a life which aims at being like God, which terminates in him, and is derived to you through Christ.

Holy. There is an holiness that stands in an entire rectitude of heart and life, by which we are conformed to the nature and will of God. And there is a relative

* 1 Cor. vi. 10.

† Rom. vi. 13.

holiness which any person or thing acquires by being dedicated to him. The former is required in the present sacrifice, that it may be *acceptable to God*. And though *holiness*, in the nature of the thing, cannot but be pleasing to God; yet it doth not reconcile a person to him who was before a sinner, and hath still sin in him. But supposing the state of such a person to be made, and continued good, that resemblance of himself cannot but be pleasing in the sight of God, though, primarily in and for the sake of Christ*.

Reasonable service, or *worship*, as the word signifies. This is also spoken in accommodation to the idea before mentioned, of *offering ourselves*, in opposition to the victims offered by the Jews. Those were *brute sacrifices*; you are to offer *reasonable ones*. You must present your body, Christian, not as performing lifeless, dead, unprofitable rites and ceremonies; but as actuated by reason and conscience; quickened and employed by principles of faith; excited by hope, reverence, affection, and gratitude: here is also implied the right God hath in us: hence nothing can be more reasonable than to offer ourselves to him.

Present, that is, dedicate, devote yourselves, set yourselves before God. As they presented at the altar the destined sacrifices ready for offering; so are you to make a tender of yourself, saying, "Lord, here I am, wholly
" thine. I come to surrender myself, my whole life and
" being, to be entirely and always at thy disposal, and
" for thy use. Accept a devoted, self-resigning soul."

Thus we are brought to the thing itself. Which now,

2dly, With less regard to the allusive terms, we come more distinctly to open and explain. It is briefly, the

* 1 Pet. ii. 5.

DEDICATING OF OURSELVES; or, *The giving our own selves to the Lord*, as the Macedonian Converts are said to have done *. And here, special notice should be taken of the word *first*, which makes that passage very remarkable. The Apostle is commending their charity towards indigent, necessitous christians; and shews how it began in piety. They did not only freely give away their substance for the relief of such as were in want; but *first* they gave themselves to the Lord.

But that we may not misapprehend the nature of this act of giving ourselves, we must know, it is not donation, in the strict and proper sense; that is, such as confers a right upon the Donee, or person to whom a thing is said to be given. We cannot be said to transfer a right to him who is †, before, *the only Proprietor and Supreme Lord of all*. It is, more properly, a surrender or delivery of ourselves upon the acknowledgment of his former right; or the putting of ourselves into his possession, for his appointed use and service, out of which we had injuriously kept ourselves. It is but giving him his own. *All things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee ‡*. It is only a consent and obedience to his just claim and demand of us, or yielding ourselves to him, as it is significantly expressed in those words which have been already mentioned, *Yield yourselves to God as those that are alive from the dead*.

But that we may more distinctly open the nature of this *Self-Dedication*, we shall shew what ought to accompany and qualify it, that we may be such suitable and grateful presents to God in evangelical acceptation, as he requires, and will accept.

I. It must be done with *knowledge and understanding*.

* 2 Cor. viii. 5.

† Dominus Absolutus;

‡ 1 Chron. xxix. 14.

It cannot but be an intelligent act. It is an act of religion and worship, as it is called in the text. It is indeed the first and fundamental act of worship; and it is required to be a rational act: your *reasonable service*. Religion cannot move blindfold. And though knowledge and reason are not throughout words of the same signification; yet as the former is partly presupposed in the latter, and partly improved by it, they cannot, with propriety, be separated.

In the present case it is peculiarly necessary, that we distinctly know the state of things between God and us. That we understand ourselves to be, with the rest of mankind, in a state of apostacy from God; that we are recalled unto him; that a Mediator is purposely appointed, through whom we are to approach him, and render ourselves back unto him. That so this may be our language in our return. "Lord, I have here brought thee back a stray, a wandering creature, mine own self. I have heard what the Redeemer of thine own constituting hath done and suffered for the reconciling and reducing of such; and, against thy known design, I can no longer withhold myself."

2. With *serious consideration*. It must be a *deliberate act*. How many understand matters of the greatest importance, which they never consider, and perish by not considering what they know *.

* This is an obscure sentence. The writer's meaning, I apprehend, is, that though many have a speculative knowledge of the great truths of religion; yet, for want of serious consideration, no impression is made on their consciences; and so the knowledge they possess serves only to aggravate their condemnation. Dr. Bates has a simile which illustrates this thought in a very striking manner. "How precious a thing soever the knowledge of the truth be; yet, if we go no farther than mere speculation, it will be only like a talent of gold to a man sinking in the sea, which serves to plunge him so much the deeper in ruin."

Consideration;

Consideration, is the revolving in our mind what we knew before. The actuating the habitual knowledge we had of things. A more distinct reviewing of our former notices belonging to any case; a recollecting and gathering them up; a comparing them together; and, for such as appear more momentous, a repeating and inculcating them upon ourselves, that we may be urged on to suitable action. And though this, without the power and influence of the Divine Spirit, is not sufficient; yet, being the mean he works by, it is necessary to our becoming christians; that is, if we speak of becoming so, not by fate or by chance, as too many are; but by our own choice and design, which is the same thing with *dedicating ourselves to God through Christ*, of which we are discoursing. For, upon our having thus considered and comprehended the whole compass of the case in our thoughts, either the temper of our hearts would be such, that we should dedicate ourselves to God, or we should not: if we dedicate ourselves, it is because we judge the arguments for it, more weighty than the objections against it; if we do not, it is because to the carnal temper of our hearts, the objections outweigh: and then, if we seem to consent, it is because what is to be objected came not in view; and so we should be christians to no purpose. Our contract with the Redeemer were void in the making. We should seem pleased with the terms of christianity, only because we had not digested them in our thoughts. Thus our act undoes itself in the very doing. It carries an implicit virtual repentance in it of what is done. We enter ourselves christians by surprise, or mistake: and, if we had considered what we are called to do, to forbear, to forego, to endure, would not have done it. And therefore, when we come distinctly

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ly to apprehend all this, are likely to repent and revolt. Those mentioned by the evangelist John *, while they understood not what it was to be christians, seemed very forward followers of Christ : but when they did more fully understand it, upon his telling them plainly, *went back, and walked no more with him.*

3. With a *determinate judgment*, that *this ought to be done.* There are two extremes in this matter. Some will not consider at all, and so not *dedicate themselves to God*; and some will consider always, and so never do it. Stand, shall I? Shall I halt between two opinions? Both of these are very faulty extremes in reference to the management even of secular affairs; and contrary to that prudence which should govern our actions. Indeed, in the present case, it is a reproach to the blessed God, to consider longer than till we have well digested the state of the case. For it seems as if it were difficult to determine, whether God or the Devil had the greatest right to our services. We must at last be at a point, and come to a judicious determination of the question, as those sincerely resolved christians did, who, when Christ said to them, *Will ye also go away?* answer immediately, *Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe, and are sure, that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God †.* But it must be done,

4thly, With *Liberty of Spirit.* Having thrown off all former bonds, and disengaged ourselves from all other masters, our language should be, *Other Lords besides thee have had dominion over us: but by thee only will we make mention of thy name ‡.* For our Saviour expressly tells us, *No man can serve two masters ||.* When the people of Collatia were about capitulating, the question

* Chap. vi.

† John vi. 68, 69.

‡ Isa. xxvi. 13.

|| Matt. vi. 24.

put on the part of the Romans, was, "Are the Collatine people in their own power?" which being satisfactorily answered, the matter is concluded. But in the case of yielding ourselves to God, the question cannot be concerning any previous tie in point of right. No: there cannot be so much as a plausible pretender against him. But there must be liberty in opposition to pre-engaged inclinations and affections: and this must be the language of the sincere soul, in surrendering and dedicating itself to the great God, when it is asked, "Art thou under no former contrary bonds?" The answer must be, "Lord, I am under none that ought to bind me, or that justly can, against thy former sovereign right. I had indeed suffered other bonds to take place in my heart; but they were bonds of iniquity, which I scruple not to break, and repent that ever I made. I took myself, indeed, to be my own; and have lived to myself; only pleased, and served, and sought myself, as if I were created for no other purpose; and, if the sense of my heart had been put into words, there was insence enough to have spoken such as these. Not my tongue only, but my whole man; body and soul, all my parts and powers, my estate and name, my strength and time, are all my own. Who is Lord over me? And yet while I pleased myself with such an imagined liberty, no idol was too despicable to command my homage. I have done worse than prostrated my body to a stock, my soul hath humbled itself, and bowed down to a clod of clay. My thoughts and desires, my hopes and joys, have all stooped to such trifles as wealth, or ease, or pleasure, or fame. And though this world be nothing but a bundle of lusts, none of

* Livy's History, b. i.

“ them was too base to rule me. Thus, while I thought
 “ myself at liberty, *I have been a servant to corruption.*
 “ But now, Lord, I have, through thy mercy, learnt
 “ to abandon and abhor myself. Thy grace appearing,
 “ bath taught me to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts *.
 “ Thou hast overcome me. Enjoy thine own con-
 “ quest. I am grieved, and repent from my soul, that
 “ ever I put thee to contend for, and conquer thine
 “ own.” Thus doth this *Self-Dedication* carry in it
 repentance from dead works, and faith towards God.

5. With a full bent of heart and will, as, *I have sworn,*
and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judg-
ments †; or, I have inclined my heart to perform thy statutes
alway unto the end ‡. This is, indeed, an important branch
 of Self-Dedication; namely, a willingness to yield my-
 self as God’s own property, to be *for him, and not for*
another. Which resolution of the will, though it may
 admit of several names, or be clothed with distinct no-
 tions, is but one and the same substantial act. It may
 be called, in respect of the competition there was in the
 case, *choice*; or, in respect of the proposal made to me
 of such a thing to be done, *consent.* But these are, ab-
 stracted from their references, the same act, which, con-
 sidered in itself, is only a resolute determination, “ *I will*
be the Lord’s;” and if any one, either mentally or
 vocally, direct this resolution to God, or Christ, then it
 puts on the nature of a vow; and so is properly called,
 devoting ones self. It carries in it, as a thing supposed,
 the implanted divine life and nature, whereby we are
 truly said to *present ourselves living sacrifices,* as in the
 text; or, as Paul expresses it, *To yield ourselves to God*
as those that are alive from the dead. Now this life is
 not to be understood simply, but as respecting a partic-

* Tit. ii. 11, 12,

† Psal. cxix. 106,

‡ ver. 112,

cular object, God. For before, we were not dead in the strictest sense of the word; were not disinclined or disaffected to every thing; but peculiarly towards God and his Christ. That way we were without any inclination, motion, tendency or disposition, being *alienated from the life of God*. But now we come to live this life, and are made, by his grace, to incline and move towards him of our own accord.

And as there are two noble principles belonging to this divine life and nature, *faith and love*, both of which go into this *Self-Dedication*; I shall distinctly consider the nature of each.

Faith, respects the *promises* of God, and what we are thereupon, to expect from him; and so dedicating ourselves to God, is a *self-committing*. We give up ourselves to him in trust, as the Apostle's emphatical expression intimates; *I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day**. The soul, being distressed, flees to God, knowing it cannot be safe any where else. As once a people, not able to obtain protection on any other terms, surrendered themselves to those whose help they sought, with some such expressions as these; "If not as ours, yet at least as your own, save, protect, and defend us!" Nor, in surrendering ourselves to God, is this any way unsuitable either to us or to him. Not to *us*, for *we* are really distressed, ready to perish; it is agreeable to the state of our case. Not to *him*, for it is glorious to him; a thing worthy of God to be a refuge and sanctuary for perishing souls. It is also a pleasant thing, and every way suitable to a self-sufficient, and all-sufficient being, who hath enough for himself, and for all others, whom he

* 2 Tim. i. 12.

shall have taught not to *despise the riches of his goodness. He taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy* *. *He waits that he may be gracious, and will be exalted that he may have mercy* †. He seeks out meet and suitable objects; yea, prepares them for his purpose, by humbling their hearts, making them sensible of their unworthiness, necessity, and the little disposition they feel to pray unto him. But having thus prepared the heart, there is a propriety in his shewing mercy. God is to be sought with humble veneration; and such an opportunity he waits for. It is not fit for him, not great, not majestic, to throw away his mercies upon insolent and insensible wretches; for, he is the *God of judgment*; wisdom and prudence conduct and guide all the emanations of his flowing goodness. Now it is the part of wisdom and judgment to take the season when mercy will be most fitly applied, best attain its end, be most acceptable to them who receive it, and honourable to him who shews it; and therefore, *blessed are all they that wait for him* ‡.

Let such as *are inclined* to surrender themselves to him, consider this. Apprehend you have undone yourselves. Fall before him. Lie at the footstool of the mercy seat. Willingly *put your mouths in the dust, if so be there may be hope*. And there is hope. He seeks after you, and will not reject what he seeks. He only waited to bring you to *this* disposition. It is now a fit time for him, and a good time for you; and you may, in resigning, intrust yourselves to him. His express promise is surely a sufficient ground for it. *I will receive you, and will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters* ||. But understand the matter aright.

* Psalm cxlvii. 11.

‡ Isa. xxx. 18.

† Isa. xxx. 18.

|| 1 Cor. vi. 17. 18.

Your presenting and yielding yourselves to him is not a desperate act. It is not casting yourselves away. You are not throwing yourselves into flames ; but upon the tender mercies of that God, to whom you may safely commit yourself. That which is pleasing to him, and which he invites you to, as indeed he invites *all the ends of the earth* *, cannot be either unsafe or unhappy to you.

Again, *Love* being a principal ingredient in this self-resignation, doth also admit to be called dedicating, or devoting ourselves.

This holy, ingenuous principle, respects the *commands of God*, as faith doth his *promises*, and eyes *his interest* as that doth *our own*. The dedication of ourselves, as it is influenced by love, designs the *doing* all for him we can, as faith doth the *receiving* all. By faith, we resign ourselves to him for safety and felicity ; by love, for service and duty. And an ardent lover of God thinks this a small oblation. *Myself? Alas! What am I?* Too small a thing for him who is all love, and who, though he *hath begun* to transform me into love too ; yet how mean and little is the subject he hath to work upon ! An atom of dust ! Not apt to be wrought upon to this heavenly love, by any love but his. Yet having partaken of this, it shall flame upward ; and this is all the flame, in which it is necessary thy sacrifice should ascend, which will only refine, not consume it. It may indeed be offered up in other flames ; nor will it occasion much regret, should he call any of you to be *an whole burnt-offering*, and to glorify him in the fire. Love, even in this case, will not retract its vow ; but say after our great pattern, *Not my will but thine be done*. Every true christian is, in the preparation of his mind,

* Isa, xlv. 22,

a martyr; but there are few actually called to suffer martyrdom. Our love is ordinarily to shew itself in keeping his commandments; and, with that design, we are to present ourselves to him, as the resolved, ready instruments of his service and praise.

But having discoursed so largely upon the above particulars, I shall be briefer on most of the following.

6. This surrender includes in it an *acceptance of God*. His covenant, which is now entered, is oftentimes summed up thus: *I will be your God, and you shall be my people*. There is mutual giving and receiving. We are to resign and accept at the same time. To take him to be our God, when we yield ourselves to be his people.

7. *With an explicit reference to the Lord Christ*. We are to dedicate ourselves after the tenor of a covenant whereof he is the Mediator. God doth not, upon other terms, treat with sinners. You must not offer to dedicate yourselves to him, but in the way, and upon the terms which he hath appointed.

The divine pleasure is made known, what great regard is had to Christ in all the transactions of God with men; yea, and with the whole creation. *He hath made us accepted in the beloved: in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; wherein he hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself. That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one, all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth*, even in him†.*

8. With

* Both in heaven and on earth.] The following appears to be the sense
† Ephes. i. 6. 10.

8. With *deep humility*, in conjunction with *profound reverence* for the divine Majesty. There ought to be such self-abasement as that good man Ezra expresses ; *O my God, I am ashamed, and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God ; for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens**. And indeed this naturally follows, from what was last said, of the regard that ought to be had in this matter to the Mediator. For our coming and tendering ourselves to God in a Mediator, is, in its very nature, an humiliation, and carries with it a tacit confession, that, in ourselves we are nothing, have nothing, deserve nothing ; and that only this gracious constitution could justify us in offering ourselves to God, with any hope of acceptance ; or make it less than insolent presumption for sinners to approach him, and expect to be received into his presence and service. It is not for such as we are to behave towards him, as if we either had not offended, or were capable of expiating our offences. Yea, and had there been nothing of delinquency in the case, yet great humility becomes such applications to God, joined with the profoundest reverence and veneration for him. We must have before our eyes the awful majesty and glorious greatness of God, which the Scriptures often speak of, as one notion of his holiness ; and to which we are to have the principal reference in all the solemn homage we pay to him. *Cursed*

sense of these words. Angels and men were at first in sweet and harmonious subjection to the Son of God, the great Creator of both. But man having broke himself off from the society, the Son of Man, by his humiliation and sufferings, recovers all who believe in him ; and in his human nature presides over the kingdom to which in the world of glory they and his angels belong. Compare Col. i. 16, 20, Ephes. iii. 10, Phil. ii. 10. Dodd, Fam. Expositor. Vol. v. p. 125.

* Ezra ch. ix. 6.

*be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing; for I am a great King, saith the Lord of Hosts, and my name is dreadful among the heathen *.*

9. It ought to be accompanied with *great joy and gladness of heart*, both from the nature of the thing, and the expectation we have of acceptance. The thing itself should be pleasant to us. We are to do it as tasting our own act. *The people rejoiced, for that they offered willingly †.* The self-devoting person should be able to utter this as his language; “Glad am I, that I am any thing; especially that I am a reasonable, intelligent being, capable of becoming a sacrifice to God.” And that there is hope of being accepted; how great a joy is that! The Apostle Paul lays so great a stress upon this, that he says, *We labour, we make it the height of our ambition ‡, that, whether present in the body, or absent from it, we may be accepted of him ||.*

10. *With an ingenuous disposition*, with that sincerity of heart which is to be as the salt of our sacrifice **. There must be no latent reserves, or hidden meanings disagreeing with his, which were both unjust and vain. *Unjust*, for we must not deceive any. *Vain*, for we cannot deceive him. The case admits not of restrictions; it must be done absolutely, without limitation or reserve.

You have heard this *Self-Dedication* is, in part, an act of love. And what limit can be set to a love whose object is infinite? A natural limit, it is true, as it is the love of a creature, it cannot but have; but a chosen one it ought never to have. *Thou shalt love the Lord*

* Mal. i. 14.

† 1 Chron. xxix. 9.

‡ Dodd. Fam. Expos. in loc.

|| 2 Cor. v. 9.

** Mark ix.

*thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength *.*

II. *With the surrender to him of all that we have.*

For they, who, by their own acknowledgment are not their own, but devoted, must also acknowledge they are owners of nothing else. God is the only proprietor; men have indeed the use of what his providence allots them; but he reserves to himself the property, and so limits the use, that all are to be accountable to him for what they possess; and are to use nothing but in subserviency to him. Therefore, as they are required to glorify him with their *bodies and spirits which are his*; so are they also to *honour him with their substance*.

It is the greatest absurdity imaginable, that they, who are not masters of themselves, should think they have permission to use what God puts into their hands as they please, for the service of those lusts, which have rejected at once the government of reason, and of all divine laws. Or, that he, who hath such an absolute right in them, should not have that right in what he hath committed to them, as to prescribe rules, agreeably to which they are to use and employ it. They have, it is true, a right in what is duly theirs against the counter-claim of man; but none surely against the claim, and all disposing power of God, whether signified by his law, or by his providence. Therefore with this temper of mind should *Self-Dedication* be made. "Lord, I here lay myself, and all that belongs to me, entirely at thy feet. *All things are of thee*. What I have in the world is more thine than mine. I desire neither to use nor possess any thing, but by thy leave, and for thy sake."

Lastly. This dedication of ourselves to God, should

* Luke x. 27.

be done with *proper and circumstantial solemnity*. It ought to be explicit, and not huddled up in tacit, mute intimations only, as a thing that must be supposed and taken for granted, though never actually performed.

True, it is, that a continued, uniform course of obedience to the divine will, is much more significant than having only once said, "Lord, I will be thine." Practice, whether good or bad, more fully speaks our sense, and expresses our hearts, than bare words spoken at some particular time can do: for they, at best, speak but our present sense, and, perhaps, not always that: but a course of practice shews the habitual bent of our spirits.

Nor do I think, a formal explicit transaction in this matter, whether vocal or mental, with circumstantial solemnity, is essential to a man's being a christian. A fixed inclination, and bent of heart towards God, followed with a course of practice becoming them that are his, will be sufficient evidence of the safety of a man's state. As one may, on the other hand, be the Devil's servant all his days, without having made a formal covenant with him.

But, though so explicit and solemn a transaction of this matter be not essential to Christianity; yet it may notwithstanding that, be our duty, and I have no doubt of its being so. Impressions of an invisible ruler and Lord, as of all unseen things, are very faint. Hence that instability in the covenant of God. We are not so afraid before, nor ashamed afterwards, of breaking engagements with him, as with men, whom we look in the face, and converse with every day. There is therefore, need of the strictest ties, and most solemn obligations, we can lay upon ourselves. How apprehensive doth that holy, excellent governor, Joshua, seem of this, when he was shortly to leave the people under his

conduct: and what convincing arguments doth he use, to bring them to the most express, and solemn dedication of themselves to God. First, representing the reasonableness and equity of the thing, from the many endearing wonders of mercy, which he recounts from the beginning, to the 14th verse of the 24th Chapter. Then he exhorts them to *fear the Lord, and serve him with sincerity and truth*; telling them, withal, if they should resolve otherwise to a man, what he would do. *And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom you will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served, that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.* To this they answer, *God forbid that we should forsake the Lord to serve other gods. For he it is that brought us up, and our fathers out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and which did those great signs in our sight: and so on: therefore will we also serve the Lord, for he is our God.* But fearing they did not enough consider the matter, he, as it were, puts them back, esteeming himself to have gotten an advantage over them, that they might come on again with more vigour and force. *Ye cannot serve the Lord; for he is an holy God: he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins. If you forsake the Lord, and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that he hath done you good.* Upon which, according to his expectation and design, they reinforce their vow. *Nay, but we will serve the Lord.* Having obtained this he closes with them, and says, *Ye are witnesses against yourselves, that ye have chosen the Lord to serve him. And they say, We are witnesses.* He then exhorts them afresh, they engage over again, and a covenant is made with them. After this, a record is taken of the whole transaction, and a monumental

mental stone set up to preserve the memory thereof. The good man then tells them, *Behold, this stone shall be a witness unto us; for it hath heard all the words of the Lord, which he spake unto us: it shall be therefore a witness unto you, lest ye deny your God.* This important transaction being finished, Joshua lets the people depart, every man to his inheritance.

I come now to the improvement of the subject.

And, upon the whole, if we agree the thing itself is necessary, it cannot be doubted, but it will appear of common concern to us all; and that every one must apprehend it is necessary for *me*, and for *me*; whether we have done it already, or not done it. If we have not, it cannot be done too soon; if we have, it cannot be done too often, and it may *now* be done by private, silent ejaculation, the convinced, persuaded heart saying within itself, "Lord, I consent to be wholly *"thine.* I here resign and devote myself absolutely *"and entirely to thee."* None of you know what purpose may be rising in the heart of another, even at this time. Why then should not every one who now hears, fear to be the only person that dissents from it? But if any finds his heart reluctant, it is fit such a one should consider, I do not know but this *self-devoting* disposition and resolution, is the common sense of all that are now present, but mine. And who would not dread to be the only one in an assembly that shall refuse God? Or refuse himself to him? For, let such a one think, what particular reason can I have to exclude myself from such a consenting chorus? Why should I spoil the harmony, and give a disagreeing vote? Why should any man be more willing to be dutiful and happy than I? To be just to God, or have him good to me? Why should any one be more willing to be saved than I? And to make one hereafter in the glorious, innumerable,

merable, joyful assembly of devoted angels and saints, who pay eternal homage to the throne of the celestial King?

But if any find their hearts inclining, let what is now begun be more fully compleated in the closter; and let those walls, as Joshua's stone, hear and bear witness!

Lest any should not consent, and that all may consent more freely, and more largely, I shall in a few words, shew, what should induce us to surrender ourselves to God; and what should be our conduct in consequence thereof.

1. What inducements have we to surrender ourselves to God. There are divers sorts of inducements.

Such as may be taken from *necessity*. For, what else can you do with yourself? You cannot be happy without it, for who should make you so but God? And how shall he, while you hold off yourselves from him? You cannot but be miserable, having not only neglected to engage him for you; but having engaged him against you.

Such as may be taken from *equity*. You are his right. He hath a natural right in you, as he is the author of your being; and an acquired right as you were bought by his son, who hath redeemed us to God, and who both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living; here, to rule, hereafter, to judge us. But it is not to be thought he will save us against our will. His method is, whom he saves, first to overcome, to make them *willing in the day of his power*. † And dare we who live, and move, and have our being in him, † refuse to be, and live, and move to him? or deny the Lord who bought us?

And again, such as may be taken from *ingenuity*, or

† Psal. cx. 3-

† Acts xvii. 25,

that should work upon it; namely, what we are besought by in the text, *the mercies of God*. O! how manifold are they! But they are the mercies of the Gospel, especially, mentioned in the foregoing chapter, and referred to in the beginning of this; the transferring what the Jews forfeited and lost by their unbelief unto us Gentiles. That mystery, which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel. It is in reference to these that he cries out with admiration in those remarkable words a little above the text; *O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!* † And they are the same mercies which Isaiah invites us to partake of: *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat, yea come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price. Wherefore do ye spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live, and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.* ‡

Now nothing ought more highly to recommend these mercies to us, or more engage us to accept them with gratitude, and improve them with fear, than having them brought to our hands, redeemed from the contempt of the former despisers of them. That the natural branches of the olive should be torn off, and we inserted. That there should be such an instance given

• Ephes. iii, 4, 5, 6.

† Rom. xi. 33.

‡ Isa. lv. 1, 2, 3.

us of the *goodness and severity of God*. On them which *fell, severity*; but to us *goodness*, if we continue in his *goodness*. That when he came to his own, and they received him not*, he should make so free an offer to us, that if we would receive him, we should have the privilege to be owned for *the sons of God*! What should so oblige us to a compliance with him, and make us with ingenuous trembling fall before him, and crying to him, *my Lord, and my God*, resign ourselves wholly to his power and pleasure.

And even his mercies, more abstractedly considered, ought to have this influence upon us. Were we not lost? Are we not rescued from the necessity of perishing for ever; and that in the most costly way? Costly, to our Redeemer; but to us, without cost. Is it a small thing, that he offers himself to us, as he doth when he requires that we offer ourselves to him? That he, in whom is all the *fulness of God*, having first offered himself *for us*, doth now offer himself *to us*. That he hath treated us hitherto with such indulgence, so long exercised patience towards us, sustained us in so bountiful a manner; and now, when it might be thought we should be communing with our own hearts, and asking, *What shall we render?* that he should say to us, *Render your selves*. Is that too much? Are we too inconsiderable to be his, or his mercies too inconsiderable to oblige us to be so? The mercies that flow so freely from him, for he is the *father of mercies*. The mercies that are so suitable to us. Pardon for the guilty. Light to them that dwell in darkness. Life to the dead. A rich portion and all-sufficient fulness for the poor, indigent, and necessitous. The mercies that we are encouraged to expect, as well as what we enjoy.

* John i. 11.

The great good laid up in store! The mercies of eternity to be added to those of time! The mercies of both worlds meeting upon us! That here we are to *keep ourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life!* † That, looking for that blessed hope, our life may here, in the mean time, be transacted with him. That we may abide in the secret of his presence, and, *dwelling in love, may dwell in God who is love*, till the season come, when we shall be able more fully to understand his love, and return our own.

Nor are the favours of his providence to be thought little of in the time of our earthly pilgrimage. ‡

And now if all this doth effectually induce us thus to dedicate ourselves: We are to consider,

2. What ought to be our conduct in consequence thereof.

In general, it ought to be an inducement to us to behave ourselves answerably to the state we are hereby brought into. *For as God takes no pleasure in fools*, let us, having vowed ourselves to serve and live to him, *pay what we have vowed. Better it had been not to vow, than to vow and not pay;* || and, instead of the *reasonable sacrifice* he required of us, to give him only the *sacrifice of fools*. We are upon special terms, and for special ends, *peculiar* to the most high God. They that are

† Jude ver. 21.

‡ *Favours of his providence, &c.*] Some may, perhaps, condemn the writer, for not insisting more largely on providential mercies; and allege that the Scriptures often urge them as motives to dedicate ourselves to God. This is readily allowed, and the same thought rose in the mind of the editor: but if it be considered that the text is an inference from what the Apostle had been saying in the foregoing chapters, concerning the introduction of the Gentiles into the church of Christ, in the room of the Jews; and that this was purely of grace: the objection will be obviated, and the writer appear to have followed the inspired penman more closely than was at first imagined.

|| Eccles. v. 4, 5.

thus his, are a *royal priesthood*. He hath made us *kings and priests*. Holy and good men are *kings* in reference to themselves, in respect of that self-dominion to which they are now restored; having been, as all unregenerate persons are, slaves to vile and carnal affections and inclinations.

But they are *priests* in reference to God. The business of their office, as such, terminates upon him; for *him* they worship and serve. And this is the double dignity of holy-devoted souls. They are thus *kings and priests*; govern themselves, and serve God. While they govern, they serve. Exercise authority over themselves, with the most submissive veneration of God. Crowned and enthroned; but always ready to cast down their crowns at the footstool of the supreme, celestial throne.

Into this state they come by *Self-Dedication*. And now surely, it is not for such to demean themselves at a low rate. They are of the *church of the firstborn written in heaven*. * Firstborn in a true, though not in the most eminent sense; being sons by the prime and more excellent sort of birth, in respect of which they are said to be *begotten again by the word of truth, that they should be a kind of firstfruits of the creatures of God*. † Are you devoted to God? Have you dedicated yourselves to him? Hereby you arrive to this dignity. For in the abovementioned place, it is said, *Ye are come*, you are actually, already joined to that church, and are real, present members of that holy community. You are related and united to him, *of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named*. ‡ You are of the household and sons of God; *his*, under that peculiar notion, and

* Heb. xii. 23.

† Jam. i. 18.

Ephes. iii. 14.

therefore

therefore cannot but apprehend your after-conduct should be peculiarly devoted to him.

Suffer me to instance in a few particulars. You should often reflect upon what you have done; and whose you now are. I am the devoted servant of the most high God. It was one of the precepts given by Epictetus to his disciples, "Think with yourself, upon all occasions, *I am a Philosopher,*" What a world of sin and trouble might that thought often renewed, prevent, *I am a Christian,* one devoted to God in Christ. Your having done this should clothe your mind with new apprehensions, both of God, and yourselves. That he is not now a stranger to you, but your God; that you are not unrelated to him, but his. I was an enemy, now am reconciled. I was a common profane thing, now holiness to the Lord. It is strange to think how one act doth sometimes habit and tincture a man's mind, whether it be good, or evil. What an horrid complexion of mind did Cain bear after having murdered his brother! To have dedicated one self to God, if seriously and duly done, would it have less power to possess one with an holy, calm, peaceful temper of mind?

You should hereupon charge yourself with all suitable duty towards him: for you have given yourself to him to serve him. You are his, and are to do his work, not your own, otherwise than as it falls in with his, and is his.

You are to discharge yourself of all unsuitable cares: for will not he take care of his own, who hath so severely reproved them that do not? *He that provideth not for his own, especially for those of his own house, hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.** Do you think

* 1 Tim. v. 8.

God can be like such a one? Who, if not the children of a prince, should live free from care?

You should most deeply interest yourselves in his concerns, without any apprehension or fear he will neglect those that are most truly yours.

You should abandon all suspicious, hard thoughts of him. When, in the habitual bent of your spirits, you desire to please him, it is most injurious to him to think he will abandon, and give you up to perish, or become your enemy. It is observable what care was taken among the Romans, that no hostility might be used towards those who had surrendered themselves. Can men excel God in praise-worthy things? You can think nothing of God more contrary to his gospel, or his nature, than to surmise he will destroy one that hath surrendered himself to him. And what a reproach do you cast upon him, when you give others occasion to say, "his own, they that have devoted themselves to him, dare not trust him?" You are taught to say, *I am thine, save me*, not to suspect he will ruin you. They do strangely misapprehend religion, who imagine it made up of distrusts, doubts, and fears.

You should dread to alienate yourselves from him, which is the most detestable sacrilege. You are to reserve yourselves entirely for him. *Every one that is godly he hath set apart for himself.** Yea, and you are not only to reserve, but, to your utmost, to improve yourselves for him daily. To aspire to an excellence of behaviour in some measure suitable to your relation. *To walk worthy of God who hath called you to his kingdom and glory;†* remembering, you are here to glorify him, and hereafter to be glorified with him. And, as I trust, it

* Psalm iv. 3.

† 1 Thes. ii. 12.

is your sincere desire to serve God, you would not, I presume, design to serve him under any other notion, than as *his*. By dedicating yourself to him, you become so in a *peculiar sense*. It is our part in the covenant which must be between God and us. *I entered into covenant with thee, and thou becamest mine.** This is the ground of a settled relation, which we are to bear towards him as his servants. It is possible I may do an occasional service for one, whose servant I am not : but it were mean that a great person should be served only by the servants of another Lord. To be served but precariously, and, as it were, upon courtesy only, a person of true greatness would disdain ; as if his quality did not admit to have servants of his own.

And who is there of us that finds not himself under sufficient obligation by the mercies of God, unto all this ? Or to whom he may not say, in a far more eminent sense, than the Apostle says to Philemon, *Thou owest even thyself also unto me* ?† Shall we refuse to give God what we owe ? Or can we think it fit, in itself, “ We should be no otherwise his, than,” as one well says, “ fields, and woods, and mountains, and brute beasts ? ” I may add, can it be comfortable to us, he should have no other interest in us than he hath in devils ? Is there no difference in the case of reasonable creatures, and unreasonable ? They who profess devotedness to him, and they who are his professed enemies ? Are there no mercies conferred or offered that do peculiarly oblige us more than devils ? O ! let us be more frequent and serious in recounting our mercies, and in reflecting upon God’s great goodness, that we may from time to time, urge upon ourselves this great and comprehensive duty.

* Esck. xvi, 8.

† Philemon ver 19.

And what can inspire us with greater fortitude than this? Can they be unsafe who have devoted themselves to God? Dedicate yourself, and you become a sanctuary, as well as a sacrifice, inviolably safe in what part, and in what respects it is necessary to be so. And indeed, who can think themselves unsafe, that understand what God is, and consider his power and dominion over both worlds; the present, and that which is to come. So that he can punish and reward in both; as men prove false or faithful to him. The triumphs of wickedness are short in this world! In what glorious triumphs will religion and devotedness to God end in the other!

6 JY 53



THE
T E M P E R
OF
JESUS TOWARDS HIS ENEMIES,
AND HIS
GRACE TO THE CHIEF OF SINNERS,

In his commanding the GOSPEL to Begin at JERUSALEM,

By B. GROSVENOR, D.D.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED
A SHORT ACCOUNT OF THE AUTHOR.



DR. Benjamin Grosvenor was born in London, the first of January, 1675. Both his parents were pious, and this son discovered, very early, both a sprightly genius, and a great concern about religion. When he was only ten years of age, he had a most awful sense of God on his mind, strong and terrifying convictions of the power and danger of sin remained upon him for a considerable time, till at length, he heard a sermon from a minister, whose name he never knew, which brought him to a truer knowledge of God, his Saviour, himself, and of genuine religion. After this his soul found its true rest, and he perceived the difference between being awed by terror, and constrained by rational conviction.

Having acquired this serious and manly turn of mind, he no longer relished the diversions common to youth: but after the school hours, retired to his closet, spending many hours in prayer and devout meditation, and in reading books on divine subjects with unspeakable delight; and was so frequent and fervent in these exercises, and carried them to so great a length, that his good parents, who rejoiced at the eminent piety of their son, were yet, at length, very apprehensive that he would impair his health, and hazard his constitution. He observes, in a diary now before me, that "his heart was glad at the approach of a Lord's day, that he might do nothing but worship, learn, praise, and enjoy God. *Speak, Lord, for thy servant hears*, was the language of my soul. I was ready to put in practice every thing

thing which was made known to me as my duty." And then he adds these remarkable words; "If the preacher, that day, had been shewing tricks in divinity, either metaphysical, scholastical, or critical; if he had been inflaming the passions of his audience, instead of delivering the plain things of life and godliness, I had then missed my aim, at least for that time."

"In the midst of these enjoyments, (he adds) it came into my mind how I might continue and secure them; I could not bear the thought of exchanging these delights, for the business or gains of the world. A life of christian duty and enjoyment was what I wanted to secure. Upon that, I resolved to be a minister, and then my whole life and business would lie in the things I most delighted in." At this season his mind was so deeply impressed with the truth and importance of religion, that he thought he could convert every body; he thought he could make them *feel*, as well as *hear*; that he could say so much concerning the love of God to mankind, the condescension and compassion of the Redeemer, the worth of the soul, the excellence and evidence of the Gospel; and so on, as would certainly fasten the arrow of conviction so deep in the heart of a sinner, that he should not be able to draw it out. Being at length, with the approbation of his parents, determined for the ministry, he pursued such studies as he thought most likely to qualify him for that important service. But although he had a great esteem for learning, yet he declares, that the dryness of the school exercises, and the sweetness he tasted in practical religion, kept him backward in literature for some time; but afterwards he pursued it with more industry and pleasure, though he always delighted most in the study of the holy scriptures. In 1693, he went from from London,

dön, to prosecute his studies under the Rev. Mr. Jollie, at Attercliffe in Yorkshire. In 1695. he returned from Attercliffe to London, and continued his studies under several masters, particularly the Hebrew language under Monsieur *Capell*, who had formerly been a Professor of the Oriental languages at Saumur, in France, and was then an illustrious refugee, having fled with his wife and children, and a few books, and that was all, out of the reach of popish cruelty.

In 1699. he passed his tryals for the ministry; and the same year was invited by Mr. Oldfield's congregation in Southwark, to be their assistant preacher. He accepted the call, but he shone with too conspicuous a lustre to be long confined to this station. His singular *acumen*, and lively imagination, and graceful utterance, and the warm devotion of his heart, which appeared in all his discourses, quickly brought him into London; first to a lecture at the Old Jewry, set up by some young citizens of considerable rank; and very handsomely supported; where he, and his amiable friend, Mr. Samuel Rosewell, shone with distinguished lustre. Mr. Grosvenor went into this lecture in the year 1702. and after the death of Mr. Slater, minister at Crosby Square, in 1704. was chosen to succeed him. He accepted this call, and was ordained the same year, and soon raised the congregation into a flourishing church, and a crowded auditory.

In 1703. he married Mrs. Mary South, daughter of Captain Humphrey South of Bethnal Green. In 1707. he lost his wife, who was inexpressibly dear to him, by a sudden and unexpected stroke, in the midst of their joy, after her supposed happy recovery on the birth of her second child.

How deeply and devoutly his soul was affected on
 E this

this occasion, I cannot express so well as by transcribing a few of his meditations from his diary, on the first sacrament he administered after this melancholy providence.

“Our Lord, (says he) having his own death in view, greatly desired to eat the passover with his disciples. I have *several deaths* in view. I look back on *one death* which has taken away my dearest earthly treasure; I look forward upon *my own*; and I came now so to fix my eye upon the death of Christ, that I may support the one, and prepare for the other.

God has appointed I should eat this passover with *bitter herbs*, indeed; and yet I am come here on purpose to abate the *bitterness* of my soul. There cannot be so much *bitterness* in that cup God has lately put into my hands, as there is sweetness in this *cup of blessing which we bless*. The bread of affliction, and the water of affliction, have been the provision of my lonely table; I would with the more eager appetite sit down to the bread of life that comes down from God!

Lord! to whom should we go, but unto thee? Thou hast the words of eternal life? Words of eternal life will come like healing balm into a spirit, wounded by a death, that strikes as deep into me as my own. Words of art and eloquence won't do; I come hither for words of eternal life. Thy consolations, O God, are not small; all are but small without thine!

Philosophy is a dry well, and an empty cloud. The fine spun reasonings, and the flourishes of wit, are works of men at ease. They teach me how to write and speak, but not to endure. No; but the words of eternal life, are spirit and life. Speak such words to my troubled passions, and they will be asswaged; as when thou saidst, *Peace, be still*, to the obedient winds and waves.

I flee

I flee from one death, to get relief in another. From the death of a dear Relative, to the death of an infinitely dearer Saviour. And what is there, O my soul, that can be bitter in the death of the most beloved on earth, that is not sweetened by the death of him who was most beloved in heaven!" In 1712. he married his second wife, Mrs. Elizabeth Prince, by whom he had four sons, William, Samuel, George, and Richard. In 1716. he was chosen one of the six preachers at the Merchants' Lecture, at Salters' Hall, which post he filled with great reputation, till he resigned it in 1749.

Of how friendly a disposition he was, and how ready to do kind offices, I can declare from my own experience; nor am I ignorant how honourably and generously he acquitted himself in some transactions of a private nature, which respected his worldly interest, and which were occasioned by some misfortunes that happened in his father's family. And his father and mother being reduced in their advanced years, received the fullest proof of the high regard their pious son paid to the fifth commandment.

His stature was low, but his mien was manly and graceful; and though his constitution was rather tender than robust, yet he was seldom laid aside from his publick work.

His voice, though small, was sweet and melodious, especially until the year 1726. when he was obliged to submit to a painful operation of having his *Uvula* cut out of his mouth in consequence of a violent inflammation; and which ever afterwards occasioned an impediment in his pronunciation. Nevertheless, he had so great skill in managing his voice, owing, perhaps in some measure, to his knowledge in music, that I have hardly heard any speaker more capable of affecting and

commanding an audience. He delivered serious truths from the pulpit, with uncommon freedom and energy; and if it should be allowed, that occasionally, some of his *lively turns* needed an apology, I am bold to say, many of them demanded admiration.

His judgment and faith, in the great doctrines of the christian religion, were steady and unshaken. And though I know not that his sentiments ever much altered on any points of controversy, yet he detested censoriousness, and abounded in candour and moderation. "I thank God (says he in his diary,) for that temper of mind and genius, which has made it natural to me to have an aversion to bigotry. This has improved constantly with my knowledge. And the enlarging my mind towards those who differ from me, has kept pace with my illumination and intellectual improvements. *Agree to differ*, is a good motto. The reason and loveliness of such a friendly disposition would recommend it, and I am persuaded, people would almost take it of themselves, if it were not for the several arts used to prevent it."

He used to say, "if he was pleased with any of his own compositions, it is what he has intitled, *THE TEMPER OF JESUS*;" and I do not wonder at this preference, as he habitually laboured to transcribe into his own heart and life, what he there so charmingly describes.

In 1730. the university of Edinburgh conferred on him the degree of *Doctor in Divinity*, in the most respectful manner, he not having the least knowledge of their intention, till the *diploma* was delivered into his hands.

Besides the books he published, to which he prefixed his name, he wrote some small pieces, both political and

and controversial, which are not universally known to be his.

Notwithstanding his severe afflictions, and his love to devotion and retirement, he enjoyed life as much as most men. He abounded in lively sallies of wit, and few carried innocent chearfulness, or pleasant conversation higher, amongst chosen friends, than he did: but when pastoral duty required him to visit the sick, or comfort the distressed, he endeavoured to open springs of divine consolation in the soul, and was solicitous, as a worker together with God, to turn the severest afflictions into inestimable blessings.

He was a minister in London, of distinguished reputation, upwards of fifty years; but the infirmities of age obliging him to withdraw from public service; he resigned the pastoral office in the year 1749.

During his retirement, a painful disorder increased upon him, and by degrees wore him out; but though many heard him groan, none heard him murmur or repine. I never perceived him to express any fear of dying; he viewed the darksome valley without any gloom or horror. He had long rejoiced in hope of the glory of God, firmly believing in Jesus as the resurrection and the life, and in that God, *who raised up Christ from the dead, as a pledge and earnest that he would quicken the mortal bodies of his faithful servants, by his Spirit which dwelleth in them.* To a friend at Dr. Watts's funeral, who took notice of his habitual chearfulness, he made this reply, "I'll smile on death, if God will smile on me." And this temper of mind, owing in part to a natural sweetness of disposition, but principally to the supports of a divine faith, he preserved to the last. I took an affecting leave of him the night he retired into his chamber, where he remained seven weeks; during which

which, his pain was very violent, but his patience had its perfect work. In my last visit he told me, no body knew what he endured, but he did not murmur or complain. He lost his speech some days, but not his senses, till he slept in Jesus, on Lord's-day morning, August the 27th. 1758. in the eighty-third year of his age.*

Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord; they shall rest from their labours, and their works shall follow them; and they shall assuredly arise again to consummate happiness and honour, when the returning Saviour shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them who believe.

* The foregoing account of Dr. Grosvenor, is taken from his Funeral Sermon by the Rev. Mr. Barker.



THE
TEMPER OF JESUS, &c.

LUKE XXIV. 47.

AND THAT REPENTANCE AND REMISSION OF SINS
SHOULD BE PREACHED IN HIS NAME AMONG ALL
NATIONS: BEGINNING AT JERUSALEM.

OUR Lord Jesus being risen from the dead, the method he uses to demonstrate to his disciples the certainty of so great a miracle, is very complete. He begins with their *Senses*, shewing himself to them, and offering to be touched and handled: *for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.* * He next addresses their *Faith*, by arguments from Scripture, proving, that *those things must needs be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning him.* † And, lastly, completes the conviction, and furnishes them to make the best use of it, by opening their *Understanding.* ‡ Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, that thus is behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name, among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

* ver. 39.

† ver. 44.

‡ ver. 45.

From which words we may observe,

I. *That repentance and remission of sins are both the fruits of Christ's death and resurrection; since it behoved Christ thus to suffer and rise, that they might be preached.* Had he not died and rose again, there would have been no forgiveness. There might indeed have been a kind of repentance, such as is in hell, or such as that of Judas, which sent him thither; a repentance unto death and despair. But repentance unto life, and remission of sins, are the blessed fruits that grow out of the accursed tree, and do rise with our Lord Jesus out of the same grave. *It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, that is the ground of the following challenge, Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?*

II. *Repentance and remission of sins go together, both in the commission, and in the nature of the thing.*

To preach *repentance*, is as truly the design and business of the gospel commission, as to preach *remission of sins*. Consequently, if I preach the nature of repentance, the motives to it, the necessity of it, it is all gospel, it is what the law knew nothing of, made no allowance for: but this makes one half of the gospel-commission.

Repentance, is a revolted sinner's returning back from sin and Satan, from the world and self, to God, his original happiness; as to his sovereign Lord, to be obeyed; and his best portion, to be enjoyed; depending for acceptance on the recommendation of the Mediator. For this end Christ came into the world, with this he began his ministry, *Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.* With this message were the apostles and ministers sent into all nations; and it would be very strange indeed, if Christ, his apostles, his first ministers, and his own

commission too, should be all of them only in a legal design, and governed by a legal spirit. But,

III. *The gospel-commission and offer is without exception of nation or persons*; that repentance and remission of sins should be preached unto ALL NATIONS.

Impenitence and unbelief make the only exceptions: They do indeed effectually keep our names out of the book of life, the list and characters of those whom the gospel appoints to salvation. It is no imputation upon God, that the *light of the knowledge of the glory of God in Jesus Christ*, is not as universal as the light of the sun; and that the book of Scripture is not read, wherever the book of nature lies open. *Their line is gone throughout all the world*; and wherever one line of nature's law is written, it might have been interlined with gospel discoveries, if it had not been their own fault; for the commission was as wide as possible; but they would not suffer it to run; and though it was commissioned into *all nations*, those very nations absolutely refused it, and therefore cannot justly tax Providence, for the want of that which they would never receive.

IV. *These great blessings of repentance and remission of sins, are commanded to be offered in the first place, to some of the vilest of sinners*; beginning at Jerusalem.

It is very affecting that the first offers of grace should be made to those, who of all people in the world had done it the most despite! That the heavenly gift should be tendered to those *first*, who least deserved it; not that any can deserve it at all, for then it were not grace; but *they* of all people had most deserved the contrary! That they who had abused Christ to a degree beyond the most pitiful description, should yet lie uppermost in his care, and stand foremost in his pity,

and find so much mercy from one, to whom they showed none at all!

One would rather have expected the apostles should have received another kind of charge; and that Christ should have said, *Let repentance and remission of sins be preached*, but carry it not to Jerusalem, that wicked city, which has been the slaughter-house of my prophets whom I have often sent. After them, I sent *John the Baptist, a burning and a shining light*, him they killed in prison. *Last of all, I myself, the Son came also*; and me, with wicked hands, they have crucified and slain. They may do the same by you; *the disciple is not likely to be better treated, than his Lord*. Let not the gospel enter those gates, through which they led me, its author, to crucifixion.

I have been preaching there myself these three years; I have mingled my tears with my sermons; I have supported my pretensions and character from the Scriptures of Moses and the prophets; I have confirmed them by divine miracles, and sealed all with my blood; yet *would they not give ear! Oh Jerusalem! Jerusalem!* all that I have left for thee now is, what I have before dropt over thee, a compassionate tear and wish *that thou hadst known in this thy day the things that belonged to thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes*; and so let them remain, for I charge you, my apostles, to *preach repentance and remission of sins, to all other nations*; but come not near that wicked city.

But God's thoughts are not as ours, neither are his ways as our ways; but as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are his ways higher than our ways, and his thoughts than our thoughts. Our way is, to make the chief offenders examples of justice, to avenge ourselves upon those who have done us personal injury and wrong:

wrong : but Christ chooses out these, to make examples of mercy, he commands the *first offer* of eternal life to be made to *them*, and all the world are to wait till *they* have had the first refusal of the gospel salvation.

As if our Lord had said, It is true, my sufferings are an universal remedy, and I have given *my life a ransom for many*, that the Gentiles afar off might be brought nigh, and all the ends of the earth might see the salvation of God ; and therefore, go into all nations, and offer this salvation as you go ; but, lest the poor house of Israel should think themselves abandoned to despair, the seed of Abraham, mine ancient friend ; as cruel and unkind as they have been, go, make them the *first offer* of grace, let them have the first refusal of gospel-mercy. Let them that struck the rock, drink first of its refreshing streams, and they that drew my blood, be welcome to its healing virtue.

Tell them, that as I was sent to the *lost sheep of the house of Israel*, so, if they will be gathered, I will be their Shepherd still. Though they despised my tears, which I shed over them, and imprecated my blood to be upon them, tell them, it was for their sakes I shed both ; that by my tears, I might soften their hearts towards God ; and by my blood I might reconcile God unto them.

Tell them, *I live*, and, because I am alive again, my death shall not be their damnation, nor is my murder an unpardonable sin ; but that *the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin*, even the sin by which that blood was drawn.

Tell them, you have seen the prints of the nails in my hands and feet, and the wounds of the spear in my side, and that those marks of their cruelty, are so far from giving me vindictive thoughts, that every wound they have given me, speaks in their behalf, pleads with

the Father for remission of their sins, and enables me to bestow it ; and by those sufferings, which they may be ready to think have exasperated me against them, by those very wounds, court and perswade them, to receive the salvation they have procured.

Nay, if you meet that poor wretch who thrust the spear into my side, tell *him*, there is another way, a better way of coming at my heart, even my heart's love. Tell him, if he will repent, and *look upon him whom he has pierced, and will mourn*, I will cherish him in that very bosom he has wounded ; he shall find the blood he shed, an ample atonement for the sin of shedding it ; and, that he will put me to more pain and displeasure by refusing this offer of my blood, than when he first drew it forth. In short,

Though they have gainsaid my doctrine, blasphemed my divinity, and abused and tormented my person, taken away my life, and, what is next valuable to every honest man, endeavoured to murder my reputation too, by making me an impostor, and imputing my miracles to a combination with Beelzebub ; yet, go to *Jerusalem*, and by *beginning there*, show them such a miracle of goodness and grace, that they themselves must confess is too good for the devil to have any hand in, too God-like for him to be assisting to ; that may convince them of their sin, and, at the same time, that nothing can be greater than their sin, except this mercy and grace of mine, which, where their *sin hath abounded, doth thus much more abound*, beginning at *Jerusalem*.

I shall farther improve this passage by speaking to the following things.

I. For what reasons, special to that place and people, must the gospel first *begin at Jerusalem*?

II. For what reasons, common to the case of all great sinners,

sinners, is the Lord Jesus so desirous of their conversion, and that they should know he is so?

I. For what reasons, special to that place and people, must the gospel first *begin at Jerusalem?*

1. *Christ was first promised to them, and therefore must first be offered to them.* He was the mercy promised to the fathers. The time of his coming, is called the time of the fulfilling of the promise, in the hope of which they waited instantly day and night; to whom pertained the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises*.

The promise of the Messiah was the peculiar entail of that family, of whom concerning the flesh Christ came †. Indeed, in him also do the Gentiles trust; but we come in as legatees to the new will and testament in his blood, whereby he cut off the entail, and brought Jews and Gentiles upon the same terms for salvation. *He that believeth shall be saved, to the Jew FIRST, and then to the Gentile.*

2. *The wisdom of God thought fit, to lay the foundation of the gospel at that place, where its foundation was first struck at.*

The report of his being stolen away by his disciples, was a blow at the root, for if Christ be not risen our faith is vain, and our preaching is vain; therefore, do you go first to Jerusalem, and confute that lie. Though it is a lie that has the countenance of some in figure and authority, yet, you must confront it. You are my witnesses of these things ‡, and by your testimony, I must dissipate that artifice of the devil. For otherwise, Christianity must have offered itself to the world around, with great disadvantage, if it had not first shown itself

* Rom. ix. 4.

† Ver. 5.

‡ Luke xxiv. 48.

at Jerusalem, and asserted the resurrection of Jesus to the face of those who were hired to spread that ill-con-
trived lie || of his *being stolen away*. The nations might suspect, that the doctrine of Jesus durst not show itself at Jerusalem, for want of sufficient evidence of the resurrection of its author. But your testimony will either satisfy, or leave them without excuse. You are a sufficient number; you are of approved honesty; your interest lies another way, *that* should lead you rather to fall in with the spirit of the times, and to find your account in running down the suffering cause; you cannot bear your testimony without hazard, damage, and ruin; and it was never known, that any men forged lies to their own undoing, knowing, as you do, that it will be so. Besides, your testimony shall be confirmed by signs, wonders, and miracles; not only performed by yourselves, but by those also, *who shall by your testimony believe in me*. All which renders your testimony sufficient to lay the foundation of the gospel sure, even at that very place where its foundation was chiefly attacked.

3. Upon hearing the gospel preached elsewhere round about them, they might be apt to think, that, for the greatness of their crimes, they were passed by, neglected, and abandoned.

4. Their day of grace was likely to be the shortest.

Begin at Jerusalem, for, yet a little while, and there will be no Jerusalem standing; their glass has but a little while to run. Yet forty years and Jerusalem shall be destroyed. Their nation, polity, and temple, shall

|| So Austin calls it. "For, says he, if the soldiers were asleep, How did they know his disciples stole him? If awake, Why did they let them do it?"

be no more *. You will then have time to go over the nations, but to those who have so little time remaining, none should be lost. *Begin, therefore, at Jerusalem.*

5. *It was foretold by the prophets, that the gospel should begin there, and from thence take its rise and progress into all the world; that out of Zion should go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem; that in Zion he would lay a foundation stone. Say unto Zion, thy King cometh. O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain: O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength, &c. †*

It is also the tenor of several other scripture prophecies of gospel times, besides the above. So that, to *begin at Jerusalem*, was one prophetic mark of the divinity of this dispensation; the church did hereby know where to look for their Messiah. That the world might not be at a loss in this, he ordered his prophets long before to point out time and place.

Besides, it was fit that the Son of David, who was to have the throne of his father David, should begin his kingdom at the city of David. And farther, it is worth considering, how far some prophecies, which we commonly understand of the calling of the Jews, were to receive their accomplishment at this time, by the apostles' successful execution of this commission among them, whereby so many thousands of them were converted.

6. *For a standing example of the riches and freeness of the grace of Christ, in the offer of it to the vilest of sinners:*

* 'Αφ' ἧς ἔτι παρὸν, ὥς τῆς κατασκευῆς ἱεροσολῶν, γίνεσθαι ἐν μὲν μῆνι γ'. Clem. Alex. & Origen. cont. Celsum, Lib. 14. p. 174. Ed. Cant. reckons it 42 years.

† Isai. 2, 4. Mic. 4, 2. Psal. cx. 2. Isai. xxviii. 16. xl. 9.

Begin

Begin at Jerusalem, and after the saving efficacy of my grace appears *there*, none will question the possibility of their own salvation. Shall not a poor penitent sinner be accepted, when the vilest of sinners are courted? Poor sinners of the Gentiles must not question his grace, when they see it offered to his murderers. When they see him willing to have mercy upon those who had no mercy upon him, and desirous of no other reparation for the injuries they did him, but only, that they would not refuse the grace he now offered to them; and that too, before all the rest of the world.

II. For what reasons, common to the case of all great sinners, is our Lord so desirous of their conversion, and that they should know he is so?

That he is willing they should be converted and saved, is very plain. He has not left this to be made out by inference and deduction, but has asserted it in so many words. *He is not willing that any should perish; but that all men should come to the knowledge of the truth and be saved.*

His behaviour towards some of the vilest of sinners, demonstrates, to what low degrees of condescension he can stoop, with how much tenderness he will use those upon their return, whom, by such indulgent measures he endeavours to reclaim.

I am affected when I read that God staid till the *cool of the day*, an emblem of abated anger, before he comes to deal with fallen Adam; and then follows the sinner with a promise, who was vainly endeavouring to hide himself from a curse. *The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head.* What a seasonable relief and stay to a trembling rebel!

To hear God himself preach the gospel to Cain, the first murderer, the first persecutor. *What hast thou done?*
the

the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground; there's conviction: if thou dost well, shalt thou not be accepted? there's the promise upon repentance. So that it is not the murder of a brother, nor the murder of a Saviour, that can sink a penitent soul into hell; for then God could not have told Cain, after he had killed his brother, that, if he did well he should be accepted†; nor could Peter have told the murderers of our Lord, that, if they repented, their sins should be blotted out against the times of refreshing should come from the presence of that Lord, whom they slew.

Manasseh was proverbial for wickedness, sold himself to work iniquity, and thereby to the devil, and yet God did not suffer Satan to run away with the purchase; but by a sore affliction brought him to his knees, humbled and reformed him; and if he was not truly converted and saved, still the method God used with him, was the ready way to it.

When Christ came into the world, *bringing salvation*, to whom did he offer it? Was it not to publicans and harlots? publicans, the worst of men accounted; and harlots, the worst of women! and this was the reason he gave, *I came not to call the righteous, but*

† The author, in the above paragraph, represents God as preaching the gospel to Cain, *after* he had murdered his brother. "*if thou dost well, shalt thou not be accepted?*" there's the promise upon repentance."

But this is a mistake: for the words, *if thou dost well, shalt thou not be accepted?* were spoken to Cain *before* the murder of his brother; and, though it be a truth, that murder, even "the murder of a brother, cannot sink a penitent soul into hell;" yet, as it is not the truth of the passage here alluded to, there is surely, no impropriety, in pointing out the mistake, into which the pious author has fallen. Fired with his subject, perhaps he quoted from memory: but he is often too unfaithful to be trusted, especially in the application of scripture language, about which it is impossible to use too much precision.

sinners to repentance. It was with this good design, he kept such bad company. And as a specimen of his saving power, he carried about with him several of those notorious converts, as it were with this proclamation: Behold the mighty things my grace can do! what sinners I can reclaim! what sins I can pardon! how many devils I can cast out! Look upon these and believe, that I am able to *save to the uttermost all that come unto God by me.* Look upon these and believe, that no kind, number, degrees of sins, can keep a man out of heaven, that do not keep him from coming to Christ!

The woman of Samaria, a lascivious person by her own confession, and by Christ's discovery; yet, with how soft and winning an address does he assure her, *If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.* To covetous Zaccheus, he says, *This day is salvation come to thine house.* Salvation to be had for fetching was great grace; but he brings it home to his house.

How he dignifies his sufferings! how he turns the ignominy of his cross into glory, by proving the saving merits of his death in the conversion and salvation of the dying thief! There the poor wretch hung bleeding his last. With what eyes, with what heart and thoughts, must the expiring criminal survey a Jesus hanging by him upon a cross covered with blood and scorn, so as to collect the remainder of his breath into such a prayer, *Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.* What? to a dying person for life! to a crucified Jesus for a kingdom! to one that appeared out cast by the Jews, and deserted even by his own disciples, to such a one for admission into the kingdom of glory! How extraordinary the request? how gracious the inward operations

operations that produced it? And how speedy and full the answer, *This day shalt thou be with me in paradise!* I will carry thee up with me into heaven, as the fruit of the present *travail of my soul*, as a trophy of my victory over Satan, and will show thee there, as part of the spoils that shall adorn my triumphs over hell and its powers; and as the earnest of the full recovery and salvation of all those, for whom I am now dying. He snatches from the very brink of hell, one that seemed not only void of grace, but past grace; and melts the heart in an instant, that had been hardening for many years.

St. Paul speaks of himself as if he were a monument set up by Christ to bear such an inscription as this. *This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them who should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting* *.

The crucifixion of our Lord was the most doleful tragedy cruelty ever acted, or sorrow could describe. Wherever the guilt of it could fall, one would think it should be with weight enough to sink them below the reach of mercy. The apostle charges it home upon *Jerusalem, Him—You have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain*. Never can any minister preach again to so wicked an auditory, till a new kind of wickedness arise, greater than the murder of the Lord of life. Yet, to wash these wicked hands from the guilt of all they had done, he tenders the laver of the blood of Christ, inviting them to *repent, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, every one of you, for the remission of*

* 1 Tim. i. 16.

sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost; not excepting any that were concerned in it, not excepting any of those priests who persuaded the multitude to ask Barrabas, and destroy Jesus; nor him that spit in his face, or struck him on the head; nor him that thrust the spear into his side, if any of these should happen to be in the crowd; and he was so happy as to prevail with about three thousand of them at that one sermon. And a little while after, we are particularly informed, that some, even of the priests also, were obedient to the faith. A thing so much the more worthy of remark, to the honour of the word and grace of God, as the knowledge of that sort of men did both aggravate the crime of their disobedience, and enable them, beyond others, to parry off the conviction of it.

Simon Magus, though he had been a forcerer, yet upon profession of his faith and subjection to Christ, the apostles were so far from supposing he could not become a christian, or that the mercy of God did not extend even to such a character, upon repentance, that they baptized him. And when afterwards it appeared, that he was yet in the *gall of bitterness, and the bond of iniquity*, and had acted only an hypocritical part; nevertheless, to show, that if he were yet lost, it could not be from any defect of the saving grace of God, but from his continuing to be a hypocrite, they send him to the grace of God by prayer, *that the thoughts of his heart, as vile as they had been, might be forgiven him.*

The reasons of this merciful conduct, towards the vilest and greatest of sinners, may be such as these,

1. *The desperateness of the case of great sinners, makes it needful they should have good assurances.*

Their danger is more near and imminent. They are upon the very brink of destruction. Their damnation

tion lingereth not, but hasteneth to meet them; and they, at the same time, are advancing apace toward that; as Goliath, with large steps, made haste to meet the fatal sling and stone, with which David also ran toward him at the same time. Their sins are a vast number, the cry of them loud for vengeance, the weight and aggravations of them heavy; Satan the executioner has them bound in the chains of lust, under the sentence of a condemning law; the justice of God is whetting its glittering sword to cut them off; and there is but a *single breath* between them and damnation, which may very easily and suddenly be stopt: so that the mercy is greatly heightened in being offered to such as these in the first place, and with a particular solicitude to win them over. *This wine must be given to them that are so ready to perish.*

Besides, it is with great difficulty that great sinners, upon conviction, are even now brought to believe there is mercy for them: and it would have been harder still, had there been no instances of extraordinary grace to sinners of an uncommon size.

Had the gospel taken a large round before it came to Jerusalem, the offers of mercy would not have been so easily believed, as when they came so fresh from his own lips, whose anger they had much more reason to fear, than to hope for his mercy. But the unparalleled grace of sending it to them first, was superior to all objection. This sets it as much above all doubt and scruple, as it was beyond all example or expectation. Indeed, before sinners are awakened to a sense of their sins, and of God's justice, they are very confident of his mercy. The mercy of God is infinite, say they, goodness is his nature, he never made any of his creatures to do them hurt, and it is an easy thing enough, to entertain the
hopes

hopes of salvation through the merits of Christ, and the mercy of God. But how suddenly is the style altered, upon a deep conviction of conscience, and the opening the eye to see the number, nature, and aggravation of their sins, together with the law, the holiness, and justice of God arming against them? Then, is there mercy for such a wretch as *I*? Is it possible for *me* to be saved? Can so black a soul as mine be washed into purity, and so much guilt as I have contracted be removed? They, who before thought sin but a trifle, are now ready to think it all unpardonable. They, who a little before were ready to say, there is no *fear*, are now ready to conclude, there is no *hope*. They now do as much need the encouragement of such an instance as this, as before they were ready enough to abuse it.

2. *The conversion of a great sinner renders the grace of God the more glorious.*

Begin at Jerusalem, and the wonders of my grace there, will raise my name *JESUS*, to its just esteem in the world. The Saviour, the God will appear in all their height and lustre, and my power *to save to the uttermost, all that come unto God by me*. Let the world see what distempers the skill of this physician can heal, and what sins the grace of God can pardon. It is like the honour a physician gains by healing a distemper given over by all others. Jerusalem seemed abandoned to sin, misery, and the devil, when Christ said, *Now the things of thy peace are hid from thine eyes, thine house is left unto thee desolate*. A desperate case! He must be mighty to save indeed, who undertakes such a case as this! And yet, that future ages might believe there could be no such thing as a foil to the skill and power of our physician, to show his art in saving souls, he sends the remedy thither first, where one would have thought them

them past all, and makes it effectual to every one that puts himself into his hands. *For God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins hath quickened us together with Christ, by grace ye are saved; and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come he might SHOW THE EXCEEDING RICHES OF HIS GRACE, in his kindness towards us, through Christ Jesus **. This, he declares, is to get himself a NAME; for he says, *I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me, and whereby they have transgressed against me: and it shall be to me a NAME of joy, a praise, and an honour before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear of all the good I do unto them†. I, even I am he that blotteth out your iniquity for my NAME's sake. So when they had heard that he which persecuted us in times past, now preached the faith which once he destroyed, they glorified God in me ‡. It renders the grace of God the more glorious.*

3. *The conversion of great sinners does more than ordinary weaken the interest and kingdom of Satan.*

They are leading men in the party of hell. They do a great deal of mischief before, and generally do a great deal of good after their conversion. Their example very often draws in others. If one sinner spoils a great deal of good, the conversion of such an one prevents a great deal of mischief. Paul, who while an enemy, *persecuted the church beyond measure; when an apostle, laboured more abundantly than they all. While an enemy, he says of himself, that he was exceedingly mad against the christians; and when a preacher, in the greatness of his zeal, he was thought to be so for them.*

* Ephes. ii. 4, 7.

† Jer. xxxiii. 9.

‡ Gal. i. 23, 24.

The devil lost all the cruel activity of such an agent, when he was taken off by grace, and the interest of Christ had the advantage of a diligence in its favour, proportionable to what he had used before in doing mischief.

They are sensible how much grace went to their recovery — how much was forgiven them — how much they are thereby obliged ; for, *to whom much is forgiven, the same loveth much*, as our Lord said of a notorious convert. She anointed him with ointment, and bowed down to his feet that she might bathe them with her tears, she poured out her heart at her eyes ; while she wept over his feet, she kissed and anointed them, wiped them with the hair of her head *, and there she could as willingly have poured out her life and blood. He could hardly get water for his feet of Simon : but he was a Pharisee, and thought himself no very great sinner ; while the poor woman's love was extremely tender, officious, and overflowing. *Seest thou this woman, says Christ, thou gavest me no water for my feet ; but she hath washed my feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head, &c.* The reason of this different carriage he explains in the after parable, of which this is the sum, *That to whom much is forgiven, they love much.* Hence those fervent prayers, that activity and diligence, those warm affections, that ready self-denial, that exemplary piety, all which shine forth in some notorious converts, who think they can never do enough for him, who has done and suffered, who has given and forgiven so much to them. But in such converts as these ;

4. *The graces of sanctification do show themselves, and appear with singular advantage and lustre.*

Begin at Jerusalem, and if any of those obstinate sin-

ners there shall be softened, melted, and converted to me, it will appear to be the grace of God indeed. Begin, not at Athens, among philosophers ; but at Jerusalem, among the worst of sinners, whose reformation, virtue, and goodness, can be imputed to nothing else but the grace of God. When a person of good education, and some morals, one who passes for a good sort of a man among his neighbours, is converted, the change is not so visible, the transition is not so discernible, either to himself, or others. For this reason it is, that the time and circumstances of conversion are seldom remembered by such, as the brightest line does not show itself upon a light wall. But when the grace of God lays hold of an immoral man, a person notoriously wicked, every one sees the new creature, the alteration is plain, all behold it, and say, he is a new man, he is become quite another thing, the Ethiopian skin is changed, the leopard spots are removed, and the wolf is turned into a lamb. When they can say of one who neglected all duty, *Behold, he prays*; of a persecutor, that *he preacheth the faith which he once destroyed*. When they see a *Magdalen*, whose former character and life was as wretched, as if she had been possessed with seven devils ; when they see such an one at the feet of Jesus ; a covetous *Zacheus*, who never thought he had enough, not only refund his unjust extortions, but giving *half his goods to the poor*. When they see the *drunkard* no more *filled with wine, wherein is excess, but filled with the spirit* ; the voluptuous, become self-denying ; the passionate and revengeful, meek and patient ; the proud, humble and lowly ; this shows the grace of God to the greatest advantage ; when the divine pencil lays such bright colours and lovely features, on so black a ground.

5. *The conversion of such notorious sinners will leave all those who continue obstinate and impenitent, without excuse.*

Who can say after this, that the mercy of God was not great enough to forgive his sin, or the grace of God strong enough to overcome his corruptions, when this mercy and grace is offered to the vilest of sinners in the first place. *If I had not come, and spoken unto them, they had not had sin*, in comparison with what they now have: *but now they have no cloak for their sin* *. Did I not tell thee, I was able to save to the uttermost, all that come unto God by me; and to give proof of it, ordered my gospel to begin at Jerusalem.

The sinner that shall stand at the bar of God, with guilt in his looks, trembling in his joints, and convulsions in his conscience. Fearful apprehensions! Can he deny his guilt? No; the eye of his judge, like a flame of fire shoots into the heart and conscience, light and pain, conviction and anguish at the same time. Such light and conviction as make the old records there, which time seemed to have devoured, legible again. Can he form excuses? What can despair and unbelief say, for having kept a sinner from Christ and heaven? Ah Lord! I thought myself too great a sinner to be pardoned; that is, Christ may reply, you thought I was a liar, when I told you, *All manner of sin and blasphemy should be forgiven unto men*; when I told you, that *the blood of Jesus cleanseth from all sin*. Look then upon Adam, who destroyed a world, Manasseh, Rahab, Magdalen, Zacheus, Paul, and especially on those Jerusalem sinners, who laid hold of eternal life, with hands stained with my own blood. But I thought it would have been time enough upon a death bed. But by my ordering them

* John xv. 25.

to begin at Jerusalem, I let all the world know that no time was ever to be lost. I thought I could have pleaded, what I have often put off others with, that, if I was decreed to be saved, I should be saved; and if not — But who empowered thee to make such rules of acting to thyself? Upon this reasoning, there was no need of *beginning any where*. Why must secret things which belong to God, be your rule, in neglect of the plain revealed things that belong to you and your children; when I never made them a rule for your conduct, nor would you ever do it in any other case of value? You never would venture your life, health, or limbs, upon such a notion of my decrees, which shows the hypocrisy of such a pretence. You never said within yourself, If I am decreed to escape, I shall escape, and so refused to avoid a wild beast, or the mouth of a cannon. If I am decreed to be preserved, I shall be preserved, and so let the fire burn that had kindled upon your house: and why the *end*, salvation, should be expected merely from a decree, without the *means*, repentance, faith, and holiness, when you always joined them together in other cases, is only because in this case you did not like the *means*. And by the very decrees you plead, I have ordained, that such shall never obtain this *end*, who dislike the *means*; who neglect—*holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord*. But, O Lord! I had heard a great deal of thy mercy, even to thy murderers, and I thought I might have depended upon it. To which Christ may finally answer, such mercy as you depended upon was never heard of in my gospel; it was a pure invention of your own and the devil's; and as for Jerusalem, repentance always went along with that commission which carried them the forgiveness of sins.

To what has been said, for the practical improvement of this behaviour of our Lord, we may add the following remarks;

1. *The grace of God always prevents us, and begins with us.*

Begin at Jerusalem, or Jerusalem would have been long enough before they would have sought after him: *he prevents us with the blessings of his goodness.* The good shepherd goes after the lost sheep: for he came to seek, in order to save, that which was lost. While the prodigal was a great way off, the father runs to meet him; so little reason is there to fear he will run from us, when we come to him.

2. *This is strong consolation against any temptations to despair, that arise from the thought of your being the greatest of sinners.*

What could our Lord do more to encourage you to hope? And what can you do so unsuitable to all this, as to throw it up, in distrust of him, or desponding in yourselves? Is it possible for all the powers of darkness to form a cloud so gloomy, as this will not dart some light and comfort through? Open thy soul to this assurance, it is a beam from the face of thy Redeemer, *to give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death.* Look upon Jerusalem, and tell the devil he lies, the next time he says there is *no hope.*

But he urges, I am a vile sinner. True, yet this text stands between me and damnation, between me and despair. But I am the chief of sinners.—Agreed—make me as black to my own conscience as possible, it shall only serve to raise my admiration of the free grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and drive me the surer to him who came into the world *to save sinners, of whom I am chief.*—But thy sin is such it cannot be forgiven.—That's a lie of the devil; for *the blood of Jesus Christ*
cleanseth

cleanseth us from all sin ; and all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men. — But you have sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost. — If so, you were too sure of me to give me all this disturbance ; *when the strong man keeps the palace, all is in peace* ; no workings of the good Spirit, no disturbance from the evil one. My concern about my soul, and your opposition, are things inconsistent with the state you would persuade me I am in. I will not let go my hope, since he wants nothing belonging to a complete Saviour, and I want nothing but what I may receive from him.

3. *These things conclude as strongly against presumption in the other extreme.*

Look over all the instances here mentioned, and see if any of them were saved without faith and repentance. Will you say, Paul, Mary Magdalen, and the Jerusalem sinners, were saved by Christ upon their faith, repentance, and new obedience ; therefore I shall be saved by this mercy without them ? They were saved from their sins, therefore I shall be saved in them ? This is presuming upon a sort of grace, that the Bible nowhere promises, and that never saved any one soul yet, nor ever will. Besides, were not those who remained impenitent, afterwards destroyed for all this ? Properly speaking, none ought to despair of the mercy of Christ, but those who thus presume upon it, by expecting the benefits of it, in a way it shall never be bestowed. The established order of salvation is, *repentance and remission of sins* ; we are saved by grace *through the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost* : out of this method, all the merit of Christ, and all the mercy of God will not save me. It was mercy and grace brought forth this method, wisdom and justice approved it. Can the same mercy and grace annul it ? Can truth and holiness ever leave it ? In this method,

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the worst of sins shall not be my ruin ; but out of it, all the grace in heaven cannot prevent it, because, properly speaking, there is no such grace in heaven, nor any where else, but in the vain imagination of those who love their sins too well to part with them, even for eternal life itself.

The offer of salvation, is, indeed, amazing grace ; but mercy merely offered, saves no man, without acceptance of the grace, and compliance with the method of salvation. It is *to as many as received him*, that power is given to *become the sons of God*. What is included in this acceptance of mercy ; how the grace of God works in us ; what we can do, or cannot do in it, belongs not to me at present to enquire. But the absolute necessity of the thing itself, is what appears from this text, against all presumption whatsoever, because, there is nothing in heaven or earth, provided in the room of faith and holiness, nor can any one stand forth and say, that the grace of the gospel has made provision of any thing, either in God, Christ, or the Spirit of God, to stand in the room of faith and holiness : for without these, I have no part in God or Christ : and farther, because these sinners of Jerusalem, who did not repent and believe, according to this commission were afterwards, notwithstanding the grace of the offer, finally destroyed. In a word, the immense goodness of this offer forbids all despair, and yet at the same time, doubles the damnation of such as dare sinfully presume upon it on the one hand, or refuse it on the other.

4. *This is a warrant and obligation upon ministers to offer salvation to the worst of sinners.*

They were to go into the city, and preach repentance and remission of sins to whosoever they had met. Had they met the false witnesses, that witnessed against him, had they met those that cried out, *Crucify*

him, Crucify him, they must have preached this same crucified Jesus to them all.

The original commissions are the model of all our after preaching, and by comparing them together, they deliver the two great ends of preaching; one is, the *conversion* of sinners. *Let repentance and remission of sins be preached unto all nations*; the other, *edification* of Saints. *Teaching them to do, whatsoever I have commanded.* This is the *whole counsel of God*. You therefore, who are christians, should not think much of the time and pains laid out sometimes upon sinners, in those things, both of knowledge and practice, which, it may be, you are already very well acquainted with. There was a time when you needed the same things to be laid before you; others then sat by and heard those things which proved your conversion, though they were well acquainted with them, and had heard them many times before.

They forget this, who give way to such a nicety in hearing, as creates indifference, if not uneasiness, under the plain and necessary addresses to those who are yet in their sins, and to people of a lower class. Some are all for a word of knowledge, and despise what is not deep, researched, and peculiar—We knew all this before—As if, affecting the mind, impressing the conscience with a more religious sense of truths that are very well known, and repeating thereupon the same acts of worship to God, which they are, in their nature, apt to produce, were no part of our religion; when indeed, it is the very best part, and that, to which all knowledge is no farther excellent, than as it is subservient. Others are all for a word of affection, and that which does not elevate, surprise, and powerfully move the passions, is, with them, but a dull story; forgetting, that our business

nels is not only to raise the affections, but to inform the judgment, *that you may grow in all wisdom and understanding.* In short, we should have but few conversions, and the greatest part of the world would die in their sins, if you were never to hear any thing that you knew before. And, on the other hand, if we were always laying again the foundations, there would be but few built up in their most holy faith. It remains, then, that we endeavour as we can, to approve ourselves such wise stewards, as may give every one his portion in due season; that while the strong men must have their meat, the babes in Christ may not want the sincere milk of the word, *that they may grow thereby*; remembring always, that it is more to our purpose, to convert one soul, than merely to entertain a thousand.

5. *The infinite sufficiency of the merits of Christ's sufferings and death is seen in this offer.*

The Ancients used to say, If you would see the Trinity, you must go to Jordan; where the Son was baptized in the river, the Holy Ghost descending upon him, and the Father's voice was heard, saying, *This is my beloved Son.* I may say, If you would see the infinite sufficiency of the merits of Christ, and the exceeding riches of his grace, you must go to Jerusalem, and see, to what sort of people he does, in the first place, open the treasures of mercy; *the unsearchable riches of Christ*; unsearchable indeed, since Jerusalem's sins could not exhaust them. *Be it known unto you, men and brethren, that through THIS MAN is preached unto you the FORGIVENESS OF SINS, and by HIM all that believe, are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses.*

6. *He that could first destroy sin in its full strength, sin at*

at the height, and in the worst of characters; can easily do it, where it is in part already mortified and subdued.

If sinners of such a rank and size are sanctified and saved, will he not carry on the work in a weak christian? He who was able thus to seize and recover the sturdy offender, that can thus conquer sin in its full strength and vigour, cannot he subdue it when it is half dead and mortified? He that can raise from the dead, can surely continue life where it is begun. It is a comfort to a weak and trembling christian to see what Christ has done for the most wicked and hardened sinners; for he that can thus turn a wolf into a lamb, can surely preserve the lamb from the devourer.

7. Jerusalem is the mother-church of all churches; the mother of us all.

There, the gospel began, thence, it had its rise and spring. As at Antioch the christian name, so at Jerusalem the christian church, first began. How proud had Rome been, if either of these had been done at that city? if Christ had said, *Let repentance and remission of sins, be preached to all nations, in my name;* BEGINNING AT ROME; or, if it had been said, *the disciples were first called christians at ROME?* they would immediately have cried out, *Mother-church.* They would have made a mighty noise about *beginning at Rome, &c.* This would have been demonstration for their sham *supremacy* over all churches. But as truly as Eve was the mother of all living, Jerusalem appears to be the mother of all churches. There, Peter preached his first sermon; there, he made his first converts, and founded the first church, that is, the first congregation of faithful people, and this is what even they who compliment Rome with this affected claim of supremacy, are themselves forced

to acknowledge * ; yes, and we too, are willing enough to allow her the title of *mother*, in such sense as the scripture has done it before us, that is to say, *the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth*.

8. *This obliges all who have obtained this grace, to be of a like merciful and forgiving spirit.*

To be implacable, is to be like a devil ; to be a christian, is to be like this Jesus, who, upon a cross, prayed for his enemies, *Father, forgive them*. Like this Jesus, who, after his resurrection, courted these murderers into the salvation purchased by his blood and death ; who gladly bestowed it upon all that would accept it, and waited forty years upon the rest, that they might have *time and space to repent*. This Jesus is the head, the author, and pattern of our religion ; and this religion is certainly like himself, a religion that inspires this God-like temper of mind ; a temper particularly chosen out to shew the child of God, in one of the most genuine features of his heavenly Father. But *I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you, that you may appear to be the children of your heavenly Father.*

If Christianity does so much consist in a disposition to treat even our very enemies thus ; if Christ has enjoined this temper of mind upon all his followers, as a mark of true religion, and of its genuine professors ; if the very beauty and essence of this religion lie in having the *same mind in us, that was in Christ Jesus* ; and in some conformity to that most lovely person, whose *zeal for God's house eat up himself*, indeed, but did not devour

* Ecclesie Hierosolymitanæ quæ est aliorum omnium Mater. Baron. Anno 381. Numb. 15.

† Rev. xvii. 5.

those about him ; if it does so much consist in an imitation of that excellent person, who is goodness and benevolence itself : if, I say, this be the spirit of our religion, and of its author, JESUS, even towards enemies themselves ; tell us, O ye severe, ye rigid of all complexions and parties, tell us, how must brethren be treated ? How must those, who are weak in the faith, be received ? who, though perhaps mistaken in differing from us, yet are not therefore enemies ; are not viler for mistaking the mind of Christ, than Jerusalem sinners for killing the person. Will it please him, who has forgiven thee and them so many talents, to see thee take thy brother by the throat for a few pence ; and they too, not borrowed by him, but laid upon him by thee ? Will perpetual worrying of thy brother suit the temper of that Jesus, who was no sooner, in a manner, got down from the cross, but contrives how to save them that nailed him to it ? One would imagine those scriptures never had a place in our bible, which command us to *bear one another's burdens*, instead of laying new ones on, *and so to fulfil the mind of Christ* ; that we should *be kindly affectioned one towards another, even as God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven us*.

Bigots, there may be, and have been, of all persuasions ; but an implacable, irreconcilable, cruel christian, is of the same figure of speech as a godly adulterer, a religious drunkard, or a devout murderer. A religion that inspires cruelty * and revenge ; that is so far

* In the Salter's-hall Sermons, preached by several eminent dissenting ministers in the year 1734, to prevent the growth of popery, there is one of Dr. Grosvenor's, intitled, *Persecution and Cruelty in the Principles, Practices, and Spirit, of the Romish Church*. Having mentioned instances of cruelty, at which human nature shudders, he proceeds thus : " St. John in the Revelation, has finely represented this cruelty of spirit

far from forgiving injuries, that it multiplies them upon such as desire to injure nobody; that can allow its votaries

in their church, by the image of a woman drunk with blood ^{a.} *And I saw the woman, the great whore that sitteth upon many waters* †, that is, who rules and domineers over much people, has a jurisdiction which spreads far and wide, and from thence pretends to be the catholic church, *I saw the woman, drunken with the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus; and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration,* that is, wonderful cruelty! To be drunk, supposes the draughts to have been frequent, large, and pleasant: nobody chooses to be drunk with what is unpleasant to the palate. So that to be drunk with blood, supposes the draughts of blood to be frequent, large, and pleasant. And what a palate must that be to which blood is pleasant, but cruelty itself? And as people, when they are drunk, talk nonsense, and do extravagant things, so this woman, having, by cruelty and blood, intoxicated herself with the grandeur thereby attained, she says, and insists upon it, that number one is number a thousand, the same number one; that an inch is as long as five or six feet; that she never did nor can tell a lie in her life, nor do any thing amiss; and she raves at every one that don't believe all this, and vows to be the death of them when she gets them in her power."

The rev. Mr. Wharton, who was chaplain to the Roman Catholic Society in Worcester, but has lately relinquished that communion; and become a Protestant, says, in the *Motives* for his change of sentiment, addressed to his late charge, "If any doctrine can be contrary to the religion of Jesus Christ, and consequently *heretical*, it must be that which teaches the justice of persecution for conscience's sake."

Again, "Look into any one of your own writers upon controversy, and you will find this argument repeatedly made use of; Protestants allow salvation to Roman Catholics; but Roman Catholics do not allow salvation to Protestants; therefore the Roman Catholic religion is the safest of the two. Humanity shudders to relate, that, notwithstanding the enormities occasioned by this tenet, it was promulgated under horrid anathemas, by the pretended vicar of the meek and humble Jesus, was adopted by christian princes and bishops, enforced by † canonized saints with all the horrors of the inquisition; justified by law; and sanctified in pulpits, &c. Nor will the colours of this picture, hideous as they are, reflect any odium upon you in the eyes of your fellow subjects. From my own

* Chap. xvii. 6.

† Ver. 11.

‡ "St. Lominick was the first inquisitor-general against the Albigenes."

votaries to contrive, as near as possible, the misery of poor people in this world, and their damnation in the next; as they do, undeniably, who first tempt a poor creature to shipwreck his conscience, and then disstrain upon him for not doing it; first tempt a man to be an hypocrite, and next punish him for not being so: I say, a religion of this complexion needs no stronger confutation, nor can be better proved to be none of his, than to be compared with this temper and spirit, with this carriage and commission of the lovely JESUS. For, O Lord! where didst thou ever put fire and sword, prisons, halters, and gibbets into thy commission? Or what was ever seen in thee, that could look like approving any such kind of methods. Hadst thou ever said to thine apostles, *Go, preach the gospel, beginning at Jerusalem*; and they that will not believe as you bid them, plunder, imprison, and starve them. Didst thou ever give thine apostles such powers? Are men to be forced by pain into the belief, that this Jesus was the most merciful being, that his religion was the kindest thing in the world; that his ministers are all sons of benignity and peace; and if they will not believe it, to call for the goaler and the rack to prove it? Such a commission would be rather supposed to come from APOLLYON, the destroyer, than from JESUS, the Saviour of mankind; *who came into the world, not to destroy men's lives, but to save them. To make the lamb and the wolf feed together, that there might be no more hurting nor destroying in all thy holy mountain.*

own observation, I am happy to assure them, that the Roman church in this, as well as in many other particulars, is daily undergoing a silent reformation. The dark monsters of persecution and bigotry are retreating gradually before the light of genuine religion and philosophy."

Think,

Think, once more, to whom it was this offer was going to be made. They had spit in his face, in whose presence angels cover theirs, raptured with delight and joy, and have no sweeter ecstasies than to behold his beauty. They had blinded his eyes, which had so often wept over them, and their children, and so often turned up to his Father in heaven for them; they struck him, buffeted and scourged him; they mocked him, despised him, and exposed him to the most contrived indignities that ever attended a crown of thorns, and a dismal cross; he forgave it all to every one of them that would but repent.

If the history of the world had ever afforded an instance of a good prince, whose government was perfectly just, his administration according to the best laws, tempered with equity and moderation, his temper gentle and mild, affable and condescending, one that treated his subjects as any father could do his children, laying himself out entirely for their benefit and service, so that the people could not but own, *He had done all things well*; how surprizing would it be to find, that, after all, this good prince was assassinated by those whom he had most obliged? That there should be any beings on this side hell capable of such a thing? Well, in the last agonies of his life, he calls some friends about him, and says to this purpose, — I am dying of the wounds they have given me; I had reason to expect a kinder return. — However, I forbid all revenge upon any of those that relent; and, before I die, I order that there be an act of grace drawn up, and proclaimed for the pardon of my murderers, upon condition only, that they be sensible of what they have done, that they acknowledge their fault: and to give them assurance, that they may depend upon it, I will have it subscribed and sealed, with some of that very blood they have drawn. And since I find myself dying away, I do command with my

my last breath, that the heralds who shall proclaim this, do send the *first copy* of it to him that gave me the *first wound*, and the *second* to him that struck the *deepest*— and so gave up the ghost. How would all the annals have rung of such an instance as this? What a noise would it have made in the world? His name would have stood for the figure of all goodness. Arts and sciences would have lavished all their treasures upon the memory of so much grace. The historian, the orator, the poet, the painter, the statuary, nor would they have refrained from raising altars to so much Divinity incarnate. — There is a person of whom all this is fact. — There is a name to which all this is due. 'Tis thine, Oh JESUS! that lovely name! even JESUS, *who hath delivered us from wrath to come*, by dying under our hands, and for our sakes.

Here then, with the apostles, let us stand, and gaze, and wonder, and worship, as they did, after he had said, these things. Things, so divine, call for a special act of adoration. The whole God shone forth in this goodness. His miracles did not speak him more divine. *I will not execute the fierceness of my wrath, I will not return to destroy Jerusalem, for I am God, and not man.* Such is the language of the Deity, and such the language of this commission.

JESUS! with what a mind and frame of soul didst thou leave this world, and go up to heaven! And art thou still the same? Has the highest place in heaven only enlarged thy power of doing good, according to the established oeconomy and order of grace? And is that grace still as free, as full, as extensive, as sufficient, as when first offered to Jerusalem? Then I am thy captive, for who can hold out against all this? Who can deny any thing to this?

O! hear

O! hear me but in the following prayer. That some portion of the same spirit that renders thee so lovely, may descend upon me, and then I am sure to be beloved by thee: for, if this be thy carriage towards thine enemies, what is thy heart towards them that love thee as their own souls? Let, therefore, all those passions and affections, which held the apostles in ecstasy of attention, when they beheld at parting, the sweet majesty of thy humble grandeur; when they beheld the marks of thy late sufferings, and of present authority; of all power in heaven and earth, and of brotherly love, at once seated in thy divine aspect; when they beheld the heavens opening, their Lord ascending, and followed thee with eyes drowned in love, and stretching, with curious wonder into the celestial presence. O! let these same passions and affections, so possess *my* soul, and devote me to thyself and service, that I may never give over looking upwards in expectation, till I shall behold thee *in like manner coming the second time, without sin, unto salvation!*



The

The following *Hymn* of Dr. DODDRIDGE's is so
suitable to the Subject, that no Apology is
made for its Insertion.

The Gospel first preached at JERUSALEM.

Luke xxiv. 47.

1. "GO, saith the Lord, proclaim my grace
To all the sons of Adam's race,
Pardon for every crimson sin,
And at *Jerusalem* begin.

2. There, where my blood, not fully dry,
Stands warm upon mount *Calvary*;
That blood shall purge away their guilt,
By whom so lately it was spilt.

3. Now let the daring rebels turn,
And o'er their bleeding Sov'reign mourn;
Their bleeding Sov'reign shall forgive,
And bid the rebels look and live."

4. Is this thy voice, All-gracious Lord?
And did the rebels hear thy word?
And did they fall beneath thy feet,
And on their knees forgiveness meet?

5. Then I may hope for mercy too;
Such love can my hard heart subdue,
And give this guilty soul a place
Among these captives of thy grace.

6. Here be it daily mine employ
To bathe thy wounds with tears of joy,
Till 'midst the new *Jerusalem*
In one full choir we sing thy name.

F I N I S.

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The Gospel was preached at JERUSALEM.

Luke xxi. 47.

1. O, faith the Lord, proclaim my grace
To all the sons of Adam's race,
Pardon for every crimson sin,
And let Thy kingdom begin.

2. Where, where my blood, not fully dry,
Stands warm upon mount Calvary,
That blood shall purge away their guilt,
By whom is slain the guilty.

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3. Now let the daring rebels turn,
And see their bleeding foreign mourn;
Their bleeding foreign shall forgive,
And bid the rebels look and live.

4. Is this thy voice, All-gracious Lord?
And dost thou rebel hear thy word?
And dost thou fall beneath thy feet,
And on his knees forgiveness meet?

5. When I may hope for mercy too,
Such love can my hard heart subdue,
And give this guilty soul a place
Among the captives of thy grace.

6. Here be it daily mine employ
To bathe thy wounds with tears of joy,
Till with the new Jerusalem
In one thou choir we sing thy name.

